p. 10.

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The Upper Mall, Hammersmith, in 1895

THE COLLECTED WORKS OF WILLIAM MORRIS

WITH INTRODUCTIONS BY
HIS DAUGHTER MAY MORRIS

VOLUME XXIII
SIGNS OF CHANGE
LECTURES ON SOCIALISM

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INTRODUCTION

THE diary of the Socialist movement which my father began to write in 1887 with a view to publication later was started on a very full scale, as it was meant to be a record of the happenings and tendencies of a time that the writer felt to be full of meaning and to presage great change. Naturally he kept it up but a short time—it is only necessary to read through a month's, or even a week's list of his lecture and other engagements to see that he had no leisure for yet further writing: but there it is, witness of a man's incessant toil and cheerful abnegation of personal comfort and leisure-pursuits for the sake of explaining his beliefs to sometimes indifferent listeners.

One night he is at Merton Abbey lecturing on True and False Society to "a rather rough lot of honest poor people"; then at the Hammersmith Club speaking on the Labour Question. Then next Sunday, after speaking in the open air—"a very cold windy (N.E.) morning at the Walham Green station"—he lectures to our own League Branch in the evening on Mediaeval England. Another day he is at Hackney, lecturing on Monopoly—"a new lecture and good, though I say it"; and then we find him in Edinburgh, in the thick of one of his Scotch campaigns, which, as you will remember, he always enjoyed. The repetition will be forgiven perhaps if I remind you again that in the midst of all this racket, this tossing to and fro, the translation of the Odyssey is being printed: in a letter in which he tells Jenny of certain street-disturbances of a trivial nature being "an elaborate lie" got up locally to discredit the Socialists, he says, "I've just finished the 16th book and am getting the first volume through the press fairly quick considering, not the wings of love but those of printers."

I have before me two long lists in parallel columns of lectures on Art and lectures on Socialism. Some are published already and are included in these volumes; some are in manuscript—ragged, much used manuscript, several of them—and the blank portion of the last page, or the back of

it, is usually covered with the pretty fragments of ornament that "took place" during question and debate time after a lecture. It was originally intended to include most of the unpublished manuscripts, arranging all lectures and papers in chronological order, so that those interested in following the development of my father's ideas could do so fully in these pages. There is bound to be repetition in some of the papers and addresses, but the questions are generally presented at a different angle, and in none of them, whether in those which deal with the various aspects of the political situation of the day, or those which enlarge upon the welfare of humanity in the future, is the diction languid or dull, as may be well imagined.

The period covered is not much more than ten years, and of this time there exist between forty and fifty lectures written in full, apart from those given *viva voce* from or without notes. Add to this, that with many of them, my father took the further trouble of altering his matter or rewriting it entirely. Some of the lectures announced and reported in the Commonweal are no longer in existence—among those of which we have a record is one I particularly regret, on "My Education." But this address was not a written one, being either delivered extempore, or from rough notes—given first, I think, in our Hammersmith lecture-room.

The lecture on "Art, Wealth and Riches" has the special interest that it was the first given after he became a declared Socialist * and made a considerable impression on his Manchester audience.

Of the present volume his own preface to Signs of Change says all that need be said, although the "repetition" and "roughness" mentioned scarcely apply to the earlier addresses on Art and Socialism, which were carefully written for audiences prepared to follow with interest and sympathy the lecturer's pronouncement on matters of art. One of them at least was given under rather exceptional circumstances. An address on Socialism delivered in Oxford with

* See Introduction to Volume XIX, page xvj.

John Ruskin in the chair is an occasion which would not have been easily forgotten by the two men most concerned, who knew and loved each other.*

When my father, away on a business or a lecturing journey, wrote home to us, we would sometimes receive descriptions of places which must have been seen out of the corner of his eyes in the intervals of catching trains, being entertained, and thinking about the lecture he had to give, or the decoration he had to advise about. Hurry or leisure, he always seemed to find the right word whether in blame or praise. Though he was not much attracted by what little he knew of Scotch country ("ugly Scotland is worse than ugly England," he remarks), the romance and the memories of Edinburgh touched him, and he sometimes let it be seen.

"The smoke hung low over Edinburgh yesterday," he wrote in one letter, ". . . the mountains looked like strong outlines against the sky and the ugly detail of the houses was a good deal hidden, so that there was something very fine about the whole view from the Castle Hill to which I wandered before getting into the church where our window is. . . ."

He wrote to his mother on a lecture-tour: . . . . "I was rather longer in Scotland than I intended and went about a good deal. The weather was very bad, worse than you have had it in England I think; I had only one fine day the morning of which I spent at Carlisle and enjoyed myself very much there: I went to see an old friend who is living at a little old Castle on the coast of Ayrshire, somewhere about

*Ruskin refers to the lecture thus: "The significant change which Mr. Morris made in the title of his recent lecture, from Art and *Democracy*, to Art and *Plutocracy*, strikes at the root of the whole matter; and with wider sweep of blow than he permitted himself to give his words. The changes which he so deeply deplored, and so grandly resented, in this once loveliest city, are due wholly to the deadly fact that her power is now dependent on the Plutocracy of knowledge instead of its Divinity." The Art of England. 1884. Page 236.

where the scene of Guy Mannering is supposed to take place. We had a great snowstorm at Glasgow: I think I never saw it snow so hard: But my audience was good notwithstanding.

"I went as far as Aberdeen this time, which I had not seen before: The old town, which has always been separate from the new, with its own Corporation, etc., is a very pleasant place; it has the Cathedral in it and the College, and the country beyond is very beautiful...."

Glasgow met with unqualified disapproval—the one admitted excellence of the city being the fine arrangements for getting away from it: "All about Glasgow and Edinburgh I will tell you when we meet. Shortly Ruskin was right about Glasgow when he called it the Devil's Drawing Room." Dundee was "Dundeesome," and Perth "blueboned." He never stayed in the Highlands, or got to care for that sort of country, and often pronounced the colour of purple heather in masses to be coarse and ugly. I think what really lay at the root of his antipathy, which was quite genuine, was all that people go to Scotland for, and get sentimental over—heather—wholesale desolation—game-preserving—killing stags—idle rich people "resting"—and so the chain of association goes. It is all part of his general impatience at people's enthusiasm over picturesque ruin, over any wholesale destruction or disorganization of the order and harmony of the lovely earth.

Another time he is down south and considering the suburbs; and he writes of Clapham Common as very dull, "even in yesterday's sun, with its old-fashioned (not old) houses, time of Thackeray and the Newcomes you know; Bible and Port Wine houses...." Oxford, as we know, was "desecrated by the invasion of the married Don...."

I have collected two or three scattered letters on wanderings at various times. This first one gives a pretty glimpse of a Welsh journey taken with Charley Faulkner who as Bursar of University College, Oxford, had College business to transact in that country:

Bull Hotel,
Bala.
April 5th, 1875.

Dearest Jenny and May

The Bull's Head is the proper name though, in accordance with the picture: 'Tis a queer dull little grey town is Bala: but we are resting the horses here for a day: this morning I went out fishing in the rain up a very pretty river, the Welsh name of which will not stick in my head: I caught but two trouts which we had for dinner: the little town lies at the head of a lake some 5 miles long which the Welsh call Llynn Teged: I don't know what that means: indeed I am but an ignorant person in Wales: the country is pretty about the lake but not so fine as some [I] have been through: We had a beautiful ride yesterday from Dinas Mowdwy up the Valley of the Dyfi (a river) till it came to an end, and then over the mountain-necks into another valley, and so here. The Dyfi Valley was most beautiful, and I thought that it would be so nice to have a little house and a cow there, and a Welsh poney or two: the little houses are very rough outside but cleaner and trimmer inside than one might imagine: We had our lunch in one (a pot-house) yesterday, and they brought us the biggest loaf I ever saw: the Italian cake-bread was a mere joke to [it]: it was very good to eat. To-morrow we go to Dolgelly which is in a very mountainous country under Cader Idris: not more mountainous though than Dinas Mowdwy: the next day to Towyn, about a mile from the sea; and on Thursday to Dinas Mowdwy again by a road that runs on the other side of Cader Idris: and on Friday we set off to Oxford and London from that place, so that I shall be back some time on Friday evening probably; and so glad as I shall be to see you and the Mammy!

We have seen something of Plinlimmon already: stopped at a farm of University Coll: under it or rather amidst it (for 'tis a great spreading down-like thing not craggy) on Thursday: the farm-house kitchen was such a nice place: there

were some very pretty children there, but not a word could they talk of anything but Welsh, except one older girl.

Well good-bye my dear dears till Friday evening or so, and give my best love to Mammy.

I am

Your most loving father

William Morris.

Here is an extract from a letter written from Reykjavik in 1871. There is nothing much new in it except the pleasant freshness of remarks made to someone not of the immediate family:

". . . Strange you would think it if you had been sailing along the coast of Iceland, as I have been, and seen the end of the world rising out of the sea; shore and hills like nothing else in the world I should think: moreover, when you come to Reykjavik, that anybody should send anything there by post except a stockfish or a lump of fat, would astound you again: yet I have been here now since Friday afternoon, and am getting used to it, as one does to everything else in the world: but tomorrow is the exciting day as we begin our up-country journey with the help of 20 horses and 2 guides: as to horses, or poneys rather, my impression is that 3 colts are born at the birth of every Icelander to help him in his journey through life; they, the poneys, are capital little fellows and look quite sympathetic. As for the men (and women) but specially the men, they seem to like anything better than hard work; in fact if I don't malign them they seem to be the laziest set of ragamuffins that ever sunned themselves on a door-step: how I sympathize with them: especially to-day wh. is as bright as may be, and would be very hot but for the N. wind that blows from Greenland on us here. I wish I could write longer but I have 8 letters to write and only a limited time and privacy to do it in: I hope to see you when I come back and talk it all over . . ."

Eighteen years later there came into his head a memory of wanderings in Iceland in the following:

Kelmscott House,
Upper Mall, Hammersmith.
Jan. 21st, 1889.

Dearest own Jenny

. . . Yes, doesn't it look beautiful to see that mist-sea on a light morning? But I remember in Iceland seeing another beautiful and curious thing; that was after all the mist was quite cleared from the mountains and everything was as clear as glass, the sky overhead cloudless blue, four or five white clouds like bundles of wool rolling about the hollows of the mountains; looking soft but quite solid. That is the great charm of mountainous countries that the whole day is a drama, and the changes are so magical and sudden. . . .

Krapotkin was very pleasant last Wednesday, though he was far from well: sitting with us in the dining-room after the lecture he told us many interesting though sad things about our comrades in Siberia and the prisons, and how good and self-sacrificing the Nihilists are out there. Also he told us this anecdote which I will tell you, dear. There was a little colony of Russians in the Far West of America right among the Red-Skins; one day the Red-Skins fell on them and burnt their fields and lifted their cattle: now if they had been Yankees they would have shouldered their rifles and gone after the Indians and shot as many of them as they could, and so have established a regular deadly feud between them: But the Russians bided their time and watching an opportunity, got hold of all the women of the tribe and brought them home to their own block-house where they kept them fast but treated them well. Then the Indians came to them, and said, "Have you got our women?" "Yes." "How are they?" "O pretty well thank you." "Well give them back to us!" "Wait a bit." "If you don't we will fall on and kill you." "No you won't because then we will kill *them* first." "Well give them back to us." "Presently, but you must do something first." "What?" "Why you must till our land again that you burned." "We don't know how." "Never

mind, we will teach you." So the Indians turned to, and as they worked between the plough-stilts and otherwise, the Russians stood by and encouraged them, crying out, "There! good fellow, how well he works! How clever he is!" and so on. Then, the work done, they got their women again and they had a feast together, and were very good friends ever after. Isn't this a pretty little story? . . .

Here too is a picture of a later wandering in "old France" —and how the recollections of those early days must have crowded on the tired traveller who had been ill and very harassed—of the days of France first seen, days of magic and delight. . . . He is tired and harassed now, but France can never lose her charm, and, all thanks be to her lovely country and noble building, the clouds clear as the little party meet the quaint and pleasant sights and incidents of these mediaeval towns, and he can write cheerfully enough.

Tête de Bœuf, Abbeville.
August 8 [1891].

Dearest Janey

Writing in an inn bedroom is done under difficulties; but here are a few lines to you since Jenny is writing to May. All well: we have had a very agreeable day, though it began drizzly: We have found it so pleasant here that we are not going on to Amiens till to-morrow morning. We went a nice drive in the morning to St. Riquier (about 8 miles) many were the magpies on the road. I expected a quite flat country, but to my surprise found a very pretty breezy chalk downland, only of course all under tillage or wood. St. Riquier a town decayed into a village and untidy and rather dismal: but the church exceedingly fine, and unrestored: the late statuary in the W. front much above the average of its date: the sacristy much painted with nice 15 century naif pictures with dogrell (in French) under them. We couldn't get into the library to see the gospels,* as

* The well-known Purple Gospels. He saw them later, when he revisited Abbeville in 1895.

The Drawing Room, Kelmscott House, Hammersmith

the curator was away on his holiday. However it does not matter, as moveable works of art are so much less important to see than immoveables on such journeys. We had a jolly walk by the canal and river-side instead (which was much better for us) finishing by buying "a present from Abbeville" for you in the form of a wide-mouthed jug with comic lady and gentleman on it, rude modern, but traditional pottery. Jenny would have it for you—don't fear it only cost 3f. 50. Altogether this is a jolly, cheerful old town, and the church a miracle of beauty ...

Dinner-time is now coming on, and that is a pleasing epoch in a decent French inn like this. So here an end with best love. I have been all right, and think I shall keep so.

Your loving
W. M.

I think the beauty of Italy rather weighed on his soul—"Italy, that sad museum of the nations," expresses the feeling; and the modern life of poor people, so brave and so gay amid their hardships, this too oppressed him as we passed across the lovely land and thought to what glories she might yet attain, were her courageous children but free to enjoy their inheritance. The last time that he had a passing glimpse of the roots of the mountains was in 1892, and he tells of it in the following letter:

Bordighera.
Nov. 18th [1892].
Friday.

Dearest darling Jenny

I delivered your mother here in good condition last night: it was quite dark by then we got to Ventimiglia even; but I think clocks and their differences might have more to do with that than the sun; as they keep Paris time the other side the frontier, and Roman time here (which is 47 minutes earlier) and you see we are a long way south and east of Paris, and a long way north and west of Rome. I cannot say very much about the looks of this place yet, as I have not been

out yet. From my window it is all olives and olives and the sea beyond; from the balcony I can just see a bit of the coast-line handsome enough. It is warm at present, but rather close to my feeling, what little wind there is seems to come from the S.E. It is greyish but not heavy. Yesterday we were rather unlucky in our weather: there was a beautiful sunrise a little just before Valence, but it soon got cloudy and showery, so much that at times we could see nothing much. But what we did see was very beautiful and interesting; a wonderful range of mountains, some part of the Jura, I suppose, to our S.E. Some way off, and on our West and N. the great high shaly banks of the Rhone, which turned up every now and then, a great broad flood rattling down toward the sea; the plain between with curious ledges of stone here and there, all in fruit-trees and vineyards, mulberries, till near Avignon we began to come on the olives. Avignon we had but a slight passing view of, and Arles we missed altogether because of the weather. A little before we came to Marseilles the country was very strange, a sort of desert of stone ledges, quite uncultivated, and before that an enormous plain also desert and all of shingle, backed by great mountains. When we turned the corner from Marseilles, we came into the regular Riviera country; very handsome much of it; but without as much character as the true French landscape. Now I won't say more of all that, as I shall I hope be seeing you so soon again, my darling. I thought I had better see your mother settled here, so I shall stay Saturday as well as to-day, and start for home on Sunday, which ought to bring me to you some time before bed-time on Monday: but if I don't come then, you must not be anxious, my own, as trains might run awkwardly and I shall then come somewhat later.

I forgot to say that we went to the Cluny at Paris and saw that beautiful tapestry there, so fine!

Mother is going to write a line: so I will say no more about her. Goodbye till my speedy return darling.

Your loving father

W. M.

The last time: the first time he went through the mountains was on a short visit to Florence with Burne-Jones, and the vivid impression of all the country that so moved his imagination (without touching his heart as the French landscape did) had lost none of its strength when, some years later, he crossed the mountains again to fetch his family home. Our own excited first vision of lonely valleys in the cold dawn was deeply engraved in our young minds by the swiftly described picture of what he had seen; so that of all the wonders of our first journey south I remember nothing so clearly as this slow threading of the mountain ways. It was always so: incidents, places seen through his eyes were ever those most vividly remembered, most keenly enjoyed. And as with all people who feel the beauty of life deeply and who have so great a gift of communicating their enjoyment and understanding to others, it worried him not a little when his fellow-travellers were absent-minded or indifferent. Bearing on this, Mr. Fairfax Murray tells a little tale with a characteristic ending: they were travelling to Bruges together once, and my father who always had his eyes fixed at the window when journeying by train, could not get his young companion to admire a certain bit of the country they were passing. At last he told him impatiently that he must never attempt landscape (Murray was about starting his career) because he didn't understand dramatic landscape. And, after the burst of wrath had quieted down, he turned to him and said sweetly, "Now I've bitten your head off, you'll admit I'm right, won't you?"

At times his longing and thoughts went out to the Eastern deserts. Once when he was lying at home with a slight attack of gout, W. B. Richmond, our friend and neighbour, came in to gossip: "Richmond called just back from Cairo," he writes; "he fired my longing to go and see the desert there by telling me all about his experiences . . ."

But even in London, so far from the mystery of the desert or the solemnity of the "barrier of the world," his power of arresting a picture in passing was ever awake.

Here for instance is a pretty glimpse of our suburbs that might almost be out of a mediaeval town. He had walked to Merton Abbey from Hammersmith through Roehampton (a good two hours' walk) and "drove back—and through Roehampton Lane the driver told me about the nunnery there and how he had heard the nuns singing angellically out in the gardens on Whitsun-Sunday night. So I stood up and looked over the fence and lo, a lot of my holy dames, black and white, just getting into boats to have a row on the lake there: for you must know that the grounds in there are quite splendid—it must be a very rich house."

Though some of the reaches of the lower Thames (the "lower Thames" to us was anything below Oxford) were too much populated to be congenial to my father in his holiday time, one always felt that every inch of the water was familiar ground, greatly loved though partly tolerated or laughed at as a blood-relation may be—never alien. Remembering how we disliked the crowds of Henley or the "cockney waters" of Pangbourne (we always required the full stretch of river to ourselves for pure enjoyment) it is pleasant to turn over the leaves of a diary of our first journey in the Ark from Hammersmith to Kelmscott, written by one of the party, and to find in certain notes in my father's hand traces of the quiet affection he bore for our small river. Cliveden of course was not approved of, and a lively note explains fully and clearly why the "gentleman's house" atmosphere of it is unacceptable; but when we get to Cookham, he speaks of the country as "very delightful: hills (low chalk banks call them) fall back from the river which is very wide: the whole full of character." To go down the water a little, whereas we were journeying up, he notes, "Country pleasant above Chertsey Lock: Laleham very characteristic, and Penton Hook decidedly beautiful: big willows all about and right up to Staines very fine." Then "From Bell Weir Lock right up to the cut at Old Windsor the river very fine, as is well beknown."

And Eton! that well-remembered short visit with him,

the beauty of the green lands that August day.... The "love of country" and delight in fine building speak in the half-repressed tenderness (if I may use the phrase) of this note: "In spite of gammoning* Eton is very fine: Chapel a sublime late Gothic work: little old quad and cloisters beyond everything delightful: item, looking from Clewer Meadows up to Windsor is not an everyday sight."

* Our word for "restoration."

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

SIGNS OF CHANGE

The following lectures were first published in pamphlet form:

The Aims of Art: small square octavo, a few copies on Whatman's paper. Office of the Commonweal, 1887.

Useful Work *versus* Useless Toil: The Socialist Platform, No. 2. Socialist League Office, 1885.

The following were reprinted from The Commonweal:

How we live and How we might live.

Whigs, Democrats and Socialists.

Feudal England.

These, with The Hopes of Civilization and Dawn of a New Epoch, were gathered into a volume under the title of Signs of Change. First printed in crown octavo with large paper (hand made) copies in 1888. Reeves & Turner.

Transferred to Longmans, Green & Co., 1896.

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Golden Type edition in quarto with Hopes and Fears for Art. Longmans, Green & Co., May, 1902.

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LECTURES ON SOCIALISM

The following were first published in pamphlet form:

Art and Socialism: Leek Bijou reprint, No. VII [1884].

True and False Society, under the title of The Labour Question from the Socialist Standpoint, Claims of Labour Lectures, No. 5. Edinburgh, Co-operative Printing Company, Limited, 1886.

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Art, Wealth and Riches appeared in The Manchester Quarterly, April, 1883. Reprinted in pamphlet form, Manchester, 1883.

Art under Plutocracy appeared in To-day, February and March, 1884. This was the address delivered at Oxford as Art and Democracy in 1883.

The Socialist Ideal appeared in the New Review, January, 1891. This was one of three papers on (I) Art, (II) Politics, (III) Literature, by William Morris, G. Bernard Shaw and H. S. Salt. Reprinted as a pamphlet in January, 1891.

How I became a Socialist appeared in Justice, June 16, 1894. Reprinted together with two short articles for May Day, 1895 and 1896, with an introduction and an article from Justice (the latter written Oct. 6, 1896) by H. M. Hyndman. Twentieth Century Press, Limited.

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New edition in demy octavo. Longmans, Green & Co., November, 1902.

Included in Vol. XXIII of the Collected Works of William Morris. January, 1915.

SIGNS OF CHANGE

PREFACE

OF the seven pieces printed in this book, two, "The Aims of Art" and "Useful Work *versus* Useless Toil," have been printed as pamphlets: three others, "How we Live and How we Might Live," "Whigs, Democrats, and Socialists," and "Feudal England," are reprinted from the Socialist weekly paper, The Commonweal; the other two are printed here for the first time.

These pieces are all of them simply Socialist lectures written for *viva voce* delivery; if any excuse be needed for their publication, as may well be, the one I have to offer is, that I have often been asked by persons among my audiences to publish them, and I would fain hope that what interested those persons may also interest others who may first come across them in a book, instead of in a lecture-room.

I must ask the reader's indulgence for the repetitions which occur in these pieces. Socialist lecturers speak almost always to mixed audiences, and hope on every occasion that amongst those who listen to them there may be some to whom Socialism is only a name, and who have sometimes a dim idea, and sometimes none at all, what that name means; I say "hope," since it is to such persons as this that they are specially anxious to give accurate information about their creed. Therefore they can scarcely omit in any lecture the statement of certain elementary propositions—such, *e.g.*, as the necessity for the abolition of monopoly in the means of production. Indeed, they are by some among their audiences often expected to do much more than this, and blamed for falling short of giving information which no ingenuity could compress into the space of an hour's lecture, over and above the special subject which they may be speaking to.

For the rest, I have only to say that these lectures put some sides of Socialism before the reader from the point of view of a man who is neither a professional economist nor a professional politician. My ordinary work has forced on me the contrast between times past and the present day, and

has made me look with grief and pain on things which many men notice but little, if at all. The repulsion to pessimism which is, I think, natural to a man busily engaged in the arts, compelled me once to hope that the ugly disgraces of civilization might be got rid of by the conscious will of intelligent persons: yet as I strove to stir up people to this reform, I found that the causes of the vulgarities of civilization lay deeper than I had thought, and little by little I was driven to the conclusion that all these uglinesses are but the outward expression of the innate moral baseness into which we are forced by our present form of society, and that it is futile to attempt to deal with them from the outside. Whatever I have written, or spoken on the platform, on these social subjects is the result of the truths of Socialism meeting my earlier impulse, and giving it a definite and much more serious aim; and I can only hope, in conclusion, that any of my readers who have found themselves hard-pressed by the sordidness of civilization, and have not known where to turn to for encouragement, may receive the same enlightenment as I have, and that even the rough pieces in this book may help them to that end.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

Hammersmith, March 1888.

HOW WE LIVE & HOW WE MIGHT LIVE.

THE word Revolution, which we Socialists are so often forced to use, has a terrible sound in most people's ears, even when we have explained to them that it does not necessarily mean a change accompanied by riot and all kinds of violence, and cannot mean a change made mechanically and in the teeth of opinion by a group of men who have somehow managed to seize on the executive power for the moment. Even when we explain that we use the word revolution in its etymological sense, and mean by it a change in the basis of society, people are scared at the idea of such a vast change, and beg that you will speak of reform and not revolution. As, however, we Socialists do not at all mean by our word revolution what these worthy people mean by their word reform, I can't help thinking that it would be a mistake to use it, whatever projects we might conceal beneath its harmless envelope. So we will stick to our word, which means a change of the basis of society; it may frighten people, but it will at least warn them that there is something to be frightened about, which will be no less dangerous for being ignored; and also it may encourage some people, and will mean to them at least not a fear, but a hope.

Fear and Hope—those are the names of the two great passions which rule the race of man, and with which revolutionists have to deal; to give hope to the many oppressed and fear to the few oppressors, that is our business; if we do the first and give hope to the many, the few *must* be frightened by their hope; otherwise we do not want to frighten them; it is not revenge we want for poor people, but happiness; indeed, what revenge can be taken for all the thousands of years of the sufferings of the poor?

However, many of the oppressors of the poor, most of them, we will say, are not conscious of their being oppressors (we shall see why presently); they live in an orderly, quiet way themselves, as far as possible removed from the feelings

of a Roman slave-owner or a Legree; they know that the poor exist, but their sufferings do not present themselves to them in a trenchant and dramatic way; they themselves have troubles to bear, and they think doubtless that to bear trouble is the lot of humanity; nor have they any means of comparing the troubles of their lives with those of people lower in the social scale; and if ever the thought of those heavier troubles obtrudes itself upon them, they console themselves with the maxim that people do get used to the troubles they have to bear, whatever they may be.

Indeed, as far as regards individuals at least, that is but too true, so that we have as supporters of the present state of things, however bad it may be, first those comfortable unconscious oppressors who think that they have everything to fear from any change which would involve more than the softest and most gradual of reforms, and secondly those poor people who, living hard and anxiously as they do, can hardly conceive of any change for the better happening to them, and dare not risk one tittle of their poor possessions in taking any action towards a possible bettering of their condition; so that while we can do little with the rich save inspire them with fear, it is hard indeed to give the poor any hope. It is, then, no less than reasonable that those whom we try to involve in the great struggle for a better form of life than that which we now lead should call on us to give them at least some idea of what that life may be like.

A reasonable request, but hard to satisfy, since we are living under a system that makes conscious effort towards reconstruction almost impossible: it is not unreasonable on our part to answer, "There are certain definite obstacles to the real progress of man; we can tell you what these are; take them away, and then you shall see."

However, I purpose now to offer myself as a victim for the satisfaction of those who consider that as things now go we have at least got something, and are terrified at the idea of losing their hold of that, lest they should find they are worse off than before, and have nothing. Yet in the course of my

endeavour to show how we might live, I must more or less deal in negatives. I mean to say I must point out where in my opinion we fall short in our present attempts at decent life. I must ask the rich and well-to-do what sort of a position it is which they are so anxious to preserve at any cost? and if, after all, it will be such a terrible loss to them to give it up? and I must point out to the poor that they, with capacities for living a dignified and generous life, are in a position which they cannot endure without continued degradation.

How we live and how we might live

How do we live, then, under our present system? Let us look at it a little.

And first, please to understand that our present system of Society is based on a state of perpetual war. Do any of you think that this is as it should be? I know that you have often been told that the competition which is at present the rule of all production, is a good thing, and stimulates the progress of the race; but the people who tell you this should call competition by its shorter name of *war* if they wish to be honest, and you would then be free to consider whether or no war stimulates progress, otherwise than as a mad bull chasing you over your own garden may do. War, or competition, whichever you please to call it, means at the best pursuing your own advantage at the cost of some one else's loss, and in the process of it you must not be sparing of destruction even of your own possessions, or you will certainly come by the worse in the struggle. You understand that perfectly as to the kind of war in which people go out to kill and be killed; that sort of war in which ships are commissioned, for instance, "to sink, burn, and destroy;" but it appears that you are not so conscious of this waste of goods when you are only carrying on that other war called *commerce;* observe, however, that the waste is there all the same.

Now let us look at this kind of war a little closer, run through some of the forms of it, that we may see how the "burn, sink, and destroy" is carried on in it.

First, you have that form of it called national rivalry, which in good truth is nowadays the cause of all gunpowder

and bayonet wars which civilized nations wage. For years past we English have been rather shy of them, except on those happy occasions when we could carry them on at no sort of risk to ourselves, when the killing was all on one side, or at all events when we hoped it would be. We have been shy of gunpowder war with a respectable enemy for a long while, and I will tell you why: It is because we have had the lion's share of the world-market; we didn't want to fight for it as a nation, for we had got it; but now this is changing in a most significant, and, to a Socialist, a most cheering way; we are losing or have lost that lion's share; it is now a desperate "competition" between the great nations of civilization for the world-market, and to-morrow it may be a desperate war for that end. As a result, the furthering of war (if it be not on too large a scale) is no longer confined to the honour-and-glory kind of old Tories, who if they meant anything at all by it meant that a Tory war would be a good occasion for damping down democracy; we have changed all that, and now it is quite another kind of politician that is wont to urge us on to "patriotism" as 'tis called. The leaders of the Progressive Liberals, as they would call themselves, long-headed persons who know well enough that social movements are going on, who are not blind to the fact that the world will move with their help or without it; these have been the Jingoes of these later days. I don't mean to say they know what they are doing: politicians, as you well know, take good care to shut their eyes to everything that may happen six months ahead; but what is being done is this: that the present system, which always must include national rivalry, is pushing us into a desperate scramble for the markets on more or less equal terms with other nations, because, once more, we have lost that command of them which we once had. Desperate is not too strong a word. We shall let this impulse to snatch markets carry us whither it will, whither it must. To-day it is successful burglary and disgrace, to-morrow it may be mere defeat and disgrace.

Now this is not a digression, although in saying this I am

nearer to what is generally called politics than I shall be again. I only want to show you what commercial war comes to when it has to do with foreign nations, and that even the dullest can see how mere waste must go with it. That is how we live now with foreign nations, prepared to ruin them without war if possible, with it if necessary, let alone meantime the disgraceful exploiting of savage tribes and barbarous peoples on whom we force at once our shoddy wares and our hypocrisy at the cannon's mouth.

How we live and how we might live

Well, surely Socialism can offer you something in the place of all that. It can; it can offer you peace and friendship instead of war. We might live utterly without national rivalries, acknowledging that while it is best for those who feel that they naturally form a community under one name to govern themselves, yet that no community in civilization should feel that it had interests opposed to any other, their economical condition being at any rate similar; so that any citizen of one community could fall to work and live without disturbance of his life when he was in a foreign country, and would fit into his place quite naturally; so that all civilized nations would form one great community, agreeing together as to the kind and amount of production and distribution needed; working at such and such production where it could be best produced; avoiding waste by all means. Please to think of the amount of waste which they would avoid, how much such a revolution would add to the wealth of the world! What creature on earth would be harmed by such a revolution? Nay, would not everybody be the better for it? And what hinders it? I will tell you presently.

Meantime let us pass from this "competition" between nations to that between "the organizers of labour," great firms, joint-stock companies; capitalists in short, and see how competition "stimulates production" among them: indeed it does do that; but what kind of production? Well, production of something to sell at a profit, or say production of profits: and note how war commercial stimulates that: a certain market is demanding goods; there are, say, a hundred manu-

facturers who make that kind of goods, and every one of them would if he could keep that market to himself, and struggles desperately to get as much of it as he can, with the obvious result that presently the thing is overdone, and the market is glutted, and all that fury of manufacture has to sink into cold ashes. Doesn't that seem something like war to you? Can't you see the waste of it—waste of labour, skill, cunning, waste of life in short? Well, you may say, but it cheapens the goods. In a sense it does; and yet only apparently, as wages have a tendency to sink for the ordinary worker in proportion as prices sink; and at what a cost do we gain this appearance of cheapness! Plainly speaking, at the cost of cheating the consumer and starving the real producer for the benefit of the gambler, who uses both consumer and producer as his milch cows. I needn't go at length into the subject of adulteration, for every one knows what kind of a part it plays in this sort of commerce; but remember that it is an absolutely necessary incident to the production of profit out of wares, which is the business of the so-called manufacturer; and this you must understand, that, taking him in the lump, the consumer is perfectly helpless against the gambler; the goods are forced on him by their cheapness, and with them a certain kind of life which that energetic, that aggressive cheapness determines for him: for so far-reaching is this curse of commercial war that no country is safe from its ravages; the traditions of a thousand years fall before it in a month; it overruns a weak or semi-barbarous country, and whatever romance or pleasure or art existed there, is trodden down into a mire of sordidness and ugliness; the Indian or Javanese craftsman may no longer ply his craft leisurely, working a few hours a day, in producing a maze of strange beauty on a piece of cloth: a steam-engine is set a-going at Manchester, and that victory over Nature and a thousand stubborn difficulties is used for the base work of producing a sort of plaster of china-clay and shoddy, and the Asiatic worker, if he is not starved to death outright, as plentifully happens, is driven himself into a factory to lower the wages of his Manchester brother worker, and nothing of character is left him except,

most like, an accumulation of fear and hatred of that to him most unaccountable evil, his English master. The South Sea Islander must leave his canoe-carving, his sweet rest, and his graceful dances, and become the slave of a slave: trousers, shoddy, rum, missionary, and fatal disease—he must swallow all this civilization in the lump, and neither himself nor we can help him now till social order displaces the hideous tyranny of gambling that has ruined him.

How we live and how we might live

Let those be types of the consumer: but now for the producer; I mean the real producer, the worker; how does this scramble for the plunder of the market affect him? The manufacturer, in the eagerness of his war, has had to collect into one neighbourhood a vast army of workers, he has drilled them till they are as fit as may be for his special branch of production, that is, for making a profit out of it, and with the result of their being fit for nothing else: well, when the glut comes in that market he is supplying, what happens to this army, every private in which has been depending on the steady demand in that market, and acting, as he could not choose but act, as if it were to go on for ever? You know well what happens to these men: the factory door is shut on them; on a very large part of them often, and at the best on the reserve army of labour, so busily employed in the time of inflation. What becomes of them? Nay, we know that well enough just now. But what we don't know, or don't choose to know, is, that this reserve army of labour is an absolute necessity for commercial war; if *our* manufacturers had not got these poor devils whom they could draft on to their machines when the demand swelled, other manufacturers in France, or Germany, or America, would step in and take the market from them.

So you see, as we live now, it is necessary that a vast part of the industrial population should be exposed to the danger of periodical semi-starvation, and that, not for the advantage of the people in another part of the world, but for their degradation and enslavement.

Just let your minds run for a moment on the kind of waste which this means, this opening up of new markets among

savage and barbarous countries which is the extreme type of the force of the profit-market on the world, and you will surely see what a hideous nightmare that profit-market is: it keeps us sweating and terrified for our livelihood, unable to read a book, or look at a picture, or have pleasant fields to walk in, or to lie in the sun, or to share in the knowledge of our time, to have in short either animal or intellectual pleasure, and for what? that we may go on living the same slavish life till we die, in order to provide for a rich man what is called a life of ease and luxury; that is to say, a life so empty, unwholesome, and degraded, that perhaps, on the whole, he is worse off than we the workers are: and as to the result of all this suffering, it is luckiest when it is nothing at all, when you can say that the wares have done nobody any good; for oftenest they have done many people harm, and we have toiled and groaned and died in making poison and destruction for our fellow-men.

Well, I say all this is war, and the results of war, the war this time, not of competing nations, but of competing firms or capitalist units: and it is this war of the firms which hinders the peace between nations which you surely have agreed with me in thinking is so necessary; for you must know that war is the very breath of the nostrils of these fighting firms, and they have now, in our times, got into their hands nearly all the political power, and they band together in each country in order to make their respective governments fulfil just two functions: the first is at home to act as a strong police force, to keep the ring in which the strong are beating down the weak; the second is to act as a piratical body-guard abroad, a petard to explode the doors which lead to the markets of the world: markets at any price abroad, uninterfered-with privilege, falsely called *laissez-faire*,* at any price at home, to provide these is the sole business of a government

* Falsely; because the privileged classes have at their back the force of the Executive by means of which to compel the unprivileged to accept their terms; if this is "free competition" there is no meaning in words.

such as our industrial captains have been able to conceive of. I must now try to show you the reason of all this, and what it rests on, by trying to answer the question, Why have the profit-makers got all this power, or at least why are they able to keep it? How we live and how we might live

That takes us to the third form of war commercial: the last, and the one which all the rest is founded on. We have spoken first of the war of rival nations; next of that of rival firms: we have now to speak of rival men. As nations under the present system are driven to compete with one another for the markets of the world, and as firms or the captains of industry have to scramble for their share of the profits of the markets, so also have the workers to compete with each other—for livelihood; and it is this constant competition or war amongst them which enables the profit-grinders to make their profits, and by means of the wealth so acquired to take all the executive power of the country into their hands. But here is the difference between the position of the workers and the profit-makers: to the latter, the profit-grinders, war is necessary; you cannot have profit-making without competition, individual, corporate, and national; but you may work for a livelihood without competing; you may combine instead of competing.

I have said war was the life-breath of the profit-makers; in like manner, combination is the life of the workers. The working-classes or proletariat cannot even exist as a class without combination of some sort. The necessity which forced the profit-grinders to collect their men first into workshops working by the division of labour, and next into great factories worked by machinery, and so gradually to draw them into the great towns and centres of civilization, gave birth to a distinct working-class or proletariat: and this it was which gave them their *mechanical* existence, so to say. But note, that they are indeed combined into social groups for the production of wares, but only as yet mechanically; they do not know what they are working at, nor whom they are working for, because they are combining to produce

wares of which the profit of a master forms an essential part, instead of goods for their own use: as long as they do this, and compete with each other for leave to do it, they will be, and will feel themselves to be, simply a part of those competing firms I have been speaking of; they will be in fact just a part of the machinery for the production of profit; and so long as this lasts it will be the aim of the masters or profit-makers to decrease the market value of this human part of the machinery; that is to say, since they already hold in their hands the labour of dead men in the form of capital and machinery, it is their interest, or we will say their necessity, to pay as little as they can help for the labour of living men which they have to buy from day to day: and since the workmen they employ have nothing but their labour-power, they are compelled to underbid one another for employment and wages, and so enable the capitalist to play his game.

I have said that, as things go, the workers are a part of the competing firms, an adjunct of capital. Nevertheless, they are only so by compulsion; and, even without their being conscious of it, they struggle against that compulsion and its immediate results, the lowering of their wages, of their standard of life: and this they do, and must do, both as a class and individually: just as the slave of the great Roman lord, though he distinctly felt himself to be a part of the household, yet collectively was a force in reserve for its destruction, and individually stole from his lord whenever he could safely do so. So, here, you see, is another form of war necessary to the way we live now, the war of class against class, which, when it rises to its height, and it seems to be rising at present, will destroy those other forms of war we have been speaking of; will make the position of the profit-makers, of perpetual commercial war, untenable; will destroy the present system of competitive privilege, or commercial war.

Now observe, I said that to the existence of the workers it was combination, not competition, that was necessary,

while to that of the profit-makers combination was impossible, and war necessary. The present position of the workers is that of the machinery of commerce, or in plainer words its slaves; when they change that position and become free, the class of profit-makers must cease to exist; and what will then be the position of the workers? Even as it is they are the one necessary part of society, the life-giving part; the other classes are but hangers-on who live on them. But what should they be, what will they be, when they, once for all, come to know their real power, and cease competing with one another for livelihood? I will tell you: they will be society, they will be the community. And being society—that is, there being no class outside them to contend with—they can then regulate their labour in accordance with their own real needs.

How we live and how we might live

There is much talk about supply and demand, but the supply and demand usually meant is an artificial one; it is under the sway of the gambling-market; the demand is forced, as I hinted above, before it is supplied; nor, as each producer is working against all the rest, can the producers hold their hands, till the market is glutted and the workers, thrown out on the streets, hear that there has been over-production, amidst which over-plus of unsaleable goods they go ill-supplied with even necessaries, because the wealth which they themselves have created is "ill-distributed," as we call it—that is, unjustly taken away from them.

When the workers are society they will regulate their labour, so that the supply and demand shall be genuine, not gambling; the two will then be commensurate, for it is the same society which demands that also supplies; there will be no more artificial famines then, no more poverty amidst over-production, amidst too great a stock of the very things which should supply poverty and turn it into well-being. In short, there will be no waste and therefore no tyranny.

Well, now, what Socialism offers you in place of these artificial famines, with their so-called over-production, is,

once more, regulation of the markets; supply and demand commensurate; no gambling, and consequently (once more) no waste; not overwork and weariness for the worker one month, and the next no work and terror of starvation, but steady work and plenty of leisure every month; not cheap market wares, that is to say, adulterated wares, with scarcely any *good* in them, mere scaffold-poles for building up profits; no labour would be spent on such things as these, which people would cease to want when they ceased to be slaves. Not these, but such goods as best fulfilled the real uses of the consumers would labour be set to make; for profit being abolished, people could have what they wanted, instead of what the profit-grinders at home and abroad forced them to take.

For what I want you to understand is this: that in every civilized country at least there is plenty for all—is, or at any rate might be. Even with labour so misdirected as it is at present, an equitable distribution of the wealth we have would make all people comparatively comfortable; but that is nothing to the wealth we might have if labour were not misdirected.

Observe, in the early days of the history of man he was the slave of his most immediate necessities; Nature was mighty and he was feeble, and he had to wage constant war with her for his daily food and such shelter as he could get. His life was bound down and limited by this constant struggle; all his morals, laws, religion, are in fact the outcome and the reflection of this ceaseless toil of earning his livelihood. Time passed, and little by little, step by step, he grew stronger, till now after all these ages he has almost completely conquered Nature, and one would think should now have leisure to turn his thoughts towards higher things than procuring to-morrow's dinner. But, alas! his progress has been broken and halting; and though he has indeed conquered Nature and has her forces under his control to do what he will with, he still has himself to conquer, he still has to think how he will best use those forces which he has mas-

tered. At present he uses them blindly, foolishly, as one driven by mere fate. It would almost seem as if some phantom of the ceaseless pursuit of food which was once the master of the savage was still hunting the civilized man; who toils in a dream, as it were, haunted by mere dim unreal hopes, born of vague recollections of the days gone by. Out of that dream he must wake, and face things as they really are. The conquest of Nature is complete, may we not say? and now our business is, and has for long been, the organization of man, who wields the forces of Nature. Nor till this is attempted at least shall we ever be free of that terrible phantom of fear of starvation which, with its brother devil, desire of domination, drives us into injustice, cruelty, and dastardliness of all kinds: to cease to fear our fellows and learn to depend on them, to do away with competition and build up co-operation, is our one necessity.

How we live and how we might live

Now, to get closer to details; you probably know that every man in civilization is worth, so to say, more than his skin; working, as he must work, socially, he can produce more than will keep himself alive and in fair condition; and this has been so for many centuries, from the time, in fact, when warring tribes began to make their conquered enemies slaves instead of killing them; and of course his capacity of producing these extras has gone on increasing faster and faster, till to-day one man will weave, for instance, as much cloth in a week as will clothe a whole village for years: and the real question of civilization has always been what are we to do with this extra produce of labour—a question which the phantom, fear of starvation, and its fellow, desire of domination, has driven men to answer pretty badly always, and worst of all perhaps in these present days, when the extra produce has grown with such prodigious speed. The practical answer has always been for man to struggle with his fellow for private possession of undue shares of these extras, and all kinds of devices have been employed by those who found themselves in possession of the power of taking them from others to keep those whom they had robbed in per-

petual subjection; and these latter, as I have already hinted, had no chance of resisting this fleecing as long as they were few and scattered, and consequently could have little sense of their common oppression. But now that, owing to the very pursuit of these undue shares of profit, or extra earnings, men have become more dependent on each other for production, and have been driven, as I said before, to combine together for that end more completely, the power of the workers—that is to say, of the robbed or fleeced class—has enormously increased, and it only remains for them to understand that they have this power. When they do that they will be able to give the right answer to the question what is to be done with the extra products of labour over and above what will keep the labourer alive to labour: which answer is, that the worker will have all that he produces, and not be fleeced at all: and remember that he produces collectively, and therefore he will do effectively what work is required of him according to his capacity, and of the produce of that work he will have what he needs; because, you see, he cannot *use* more than he needs—he can only *waste* it.

If this arrangement seems to you preposterously ideal, as it well may, looking at our present condition, I must back it up by saying that when men are organized so that their labour is not wasted, they will be relieved from the fear of starvation and the desire of domination, and will have freedom and leisure to look round and see what they really do need.

Now something of that I can conceive for my own self, and I will lay my ideas before you, so that you may compare them with your own, asking you always to remember that the very differences in men's capacities and desires, after the common need of food and shelter is satisfied, will make it easier to deal with their desires in a communal state of things.

What is it that I need, therefore, which my surrounding circumstances can give me—my dealings with my fellow-men—setting aside inevitable accidents which co-operation and forethought cannot control, if there be such?

Well, first of all I claim good health; and I say that a vast proportion of people in civilization scarcely even know what that means. To feel mere life a pleasure; to enjoy the moving one's limbs and exercising one's bodily powers; to play, as it were, with sun and wind and rain; to rejoice in satisfying the due bodily appetites of a human animal without fear of degradation or sense of wrong-doing: yes, and therewithal to be well-formed, straight-limbed, strongly knit, expressive of countenance—to be, in a word, beautiful—that also I claim. If we cannot have this claim satisfied, we are but poor creatures after all; and I claim it in the teeth of those terrible doctrines of asceticism, which, born of the despair of the oppressed and degraded, have been for so many ages used as instruments for the continuance of that oppression and degradation. How we live and how we might live

And I believe that this claim for a healthy body for all of us carries with it all other due claims: for who knows where the seeds of disease which even rich people suffer from were first sown: from the luxury of an ancestor, perhaps; yet often, I suspect, from his poverty. And for the poor: a distinguished physicist has said that the poor suffer always from one disease—hunger; and at least I know this, that if a man is overworked in any degree he cannot enjoy the sort of health I am speaking of; nor can he if he is continually chained to one dull round of mechanical work, with no hope at the other end of it; nor if he lives in continual sordid anxiety for his livelihood, nor if he is ill-housed, nor if he is deprived of all enjoyment of the natural beauty of the world, nor if he has no amusement to quicken the flow of his spirits from time to time: all these things, which touch more or less directly on his bodily condition, are born of the claim I make to live in good health; indeed, I suspect that these good conditions must have been in force for several generations before a population in general will be really healthy, as I have hinted above; but also I doubt not that in the course of time they would, joined to other conditions, of which more hereafter, gradually breed such a population, living in enjoyment

of animal life at least, happy therefore, and beautiful according to the beauty of their race. On this point I may note that the very variations in the races of men are caused by the conditions under which they live, and though in these rougher parts of the world we lack some of the advantages of climate and surroundings, yet, if we were working for livelihood and not for profit, we might easily neutralize many of the disadvantages of our climate, at least enough to give due scope to the full development of our race.

Now the next thing I claim is education. And you must not say that every English child is educated now; that sort of education will not answer my claim, though I cheerfully admit it is something: something, and yet after all only class education. What I claim is liberal education; opportunity, that is, to have my share of whatever knowledge there is in the world according to my capacity or bent of mind, historical or scientific; and also to have my share of skill of hand which is about in the world, either in the industrial handicrafts or in the fine arts; picture-painting, sculpture, music, acting, or the like: I claim to be taught, if I can be taught, more than one craft to exercise for the benefit of the community. You may think this a large claim, but I am clear it is not too large a claim if the community is to have any gain out of my special capacities, if we are not all to be beaten down to a dull level of mediocrity as we are now, all but the very strongest and toughest of us.

But also I know that this claim for education involves one for public advantages in the shape of public libraries, schools, and the like, such as no private person, not even the richest, could command: but these I claim very confidently, being sure that no reasonable community could bear to be without such helps to a decent life.

Again, the claim for education involves a claim for abundant leisure, which once more I make with confidence; because when once we have shaken off the slavery of profit, labour would be organized so unwastefully that no heavy burden would be laid on the individual citizens; every one

of whom as a matter of course would have to pay his toll of some obviously useful work. At present you must note that all the amazing machinery which we have invented has served only to increase the amount of profit-bearing wares; in other words, to increase the amount of profit pouched by individuals for their own advantage, part of which profit they use as capital for the production of more profit, with ever the same waste attached to it; and part as private riches or means for luxurious living, which again is sheer waste—is in fact to be looked on as a kind of bonfire on which rich men burn up the product of the labour they have fleeced from the workers beyond what they themselves can use. So I say that, in spite of our inventions, no worker works under the present system an hour the less on account of those labour-saving machines, so-called. But under a happier state of things they would be used simply for saving labour, with the result of a vast amount of leisure gained for the community to be added to that gained by the avoidance of the waste of useless luxury, and the abolition of the service of commercial war.

How we live and how we might live

And I may say that as to that leisure, as I should in no case do any harm to any one with it, so I should often do some direct good to the community with it, by practising arts or occupations for my hands or brain which would give pleasure to many of the citizens; in other words, a great deal of the best work done would be done in the leisure time of men relieved from any anxiety as to their livelihood, and eager to exercise their special talent, as all men, nay, all animals are.

Now, again, this leisure would enable me to please myself and expand my mind by travelling if I had a mind to it: because, say, for instance, that I were a shoemaker; if due social order were established, it by no means follows that I should always be obliged to make shoes in one place; a due amount of easily conceivable arrangement would enable me to make shoes in Rome, say, for three months, and to come back with new ideas of building, gathered from the sight of the works

of past ages, amongst other things which would perhaps be of service in London.

But now, in order that my leisure might not degenerate into idleness and aimlessness, I must set up a claim for due work to do. Nothing to my mind is more important than this demand, and I must ask your leave to say something about it. I have mentioned that I should probably use my leisure for doing a good deal of what is now called work; but it is clear that if I am a member of a Socialist Community I must do my due share of rougher work than this—my due share of what my capacity enables me to do, that is; no fitting of me to a Procrustean bed; but even that share of work necessary to the existence of the simplest social life must, in the first place, whatever else it is, be reasonable work; that is, it must be such work as a good citizen can see the necessity for; as a member of the community, I must have agreed to do it.

To take two strong instances of the contrary, I won't submit to be dressed up in red and marched off to shoot at my French or German or Arab friend in a quarrel that I don't understand; I will rebel sooner than do that.

Nor will I submit to waste my time and energies in making some trifling toy which I know only a fool can desire; I will rebel sooner than do that.

However, you may be sure that in a state of social order I shall have no need to rebel against any such pieces of unreason; only I am forced to speak from the way we live to the way we might live.

Again, if the necessary reasonable work be of a mechanical kind, I must be helped to do it by a machine, not to cheapen my labour, but so that as little time as possible may be spent upon it, and that I may be able to think of other things while I am tending the machine. And if the work be specially rough or exhausting, you will, I am sure, agree with me in saying that I must take turns in doing it with other people; I mean I mustn't, for instance, be expected to spend my working hours always at the bottom of a coal-pit. I think

such work as that ought to be largely volunteer work, and done, as I say, in spells. And what I say of very rough work I say also of nasty work. On the other hand, I should think very little of the manhood of a stout and healthy man who did not feel a pleasure in doing rough work; always supposing him to work under the conditions I have been speaking of—namely, feeling that it was useful (and consequently honoured), and that it was not continuous or hopeless, and that he was really doing it of his own free will.

How we live and how we might live

The last claim I make for my work is that the places I worked in, factories or workshops, should be pleasant, just as the fields where our most necessary work is done are pleasant. Believe me there is nothing in the world to prevent this being done, save the necessity of making profits on all wares; in other words, the wares are cheapened at the expense of people being forced to work in crowded, unwholesome, squalid, noisy dens: that is to say, they are cheapened at the expense of the workman's life.

Well, so much for my claims as to my *necessary* work, my tribute to the community. I believe people would find, as they advanced in their capacity for carrying on social order, that life so lived was much less expensive than we now can have any idea of, and that, after a little, people would rather be anxious to seek work than to avoid it; that our working hours would rather be merry parties of men and maids, young men and old enjoying themselves over their work, than the grumpy weariness it mostly is now. Then would come the time for the new birth of art, so much talked of, so long deferred; people could not help showing their mirth and pleasure in their work, and would be always wishing to express it in a tangible and more or less enduring form, and the workshop would once more be a school of art, whose influence no one could escape from.

And, again, that word art leads me to my last claim, which is that the material surroundings of my life should be pleasant, generous, and beautiful; that I know is a large claim, but this I will say about it, that if it cannot be satisfied,

if every civilized community cannot provide such surroundings for all its members, I do not want the world to go on; it is a mere misery that man has ever existed. I do not think it possible under the present circumstances to speak too strongly on this point. I feel sure that the time will come when people will find it difficult to believe that a rich community such as ours, having such command over external Nature, could have submitted to live such a mean, shabby, dirty life as we do.

And once for all, there is nothing in our circumstances save the hunting of profit that drives us into it. It is profit which draws men into enormous unmanageable aggregations called towns, for instance; profit which crowds them up when they are there into quarters without gardens or open spaces; profit which won't take the most ordinary precautions against wrapping a whole district in a cloud of sulphurous smoke; which turns beautiful rivers into filthy sewers; which condemns all but the rich to live in houses idiotically cramped and confined at the best, and at the worst in houses for whose wretchedness there is no name.

I say it is almost incredible that we should bear such crass stupidity as this; nor should we if we could help it. We shall not bear it when the workers get out of their heads that they are but an appendage to profit-grinding, that the more profits that are made the more employment at high wages there will be for them, and that therefore all the incredible filth, disorder, and degradation of modern civilization are signs of their prosperity. So far from that, they are signs of their slavery. When they are no longer slaves they will claim as a matter of course that every man and every family should be generously lodged; that every child should be able to play in a garden close to the place his parents live in; that the houses should by their obvious decency and order be ornaments to Nature, not disfigurements of it; for the decency and order above-mentioned when carried to the due pitch would most assuredly lead to beauty in building. All this, of course, would mean the people—that is, all society

—duly organized, having in its own hands the means of production, to be *owned* by no individual, but used by all as occasion called for its use, and can only be done on those terms; on any other terms people will be driven to accumulate private wealth for themselves, and thus, as we have seen, to waste the goods of the community and perpetuate the division into classes, which means continual war and waste.

How we live and how we might live

As to what extent it may be necessary or desirable for people under social order to live in common, we may differ pretty much according to our tendencies towards social life. For my part I can't see why we should think it a hardship to eat with the people we work with; I am sure that as to many things, such as valuable books, pictures, and splendour of surroundings, we shall find it better to club our means together; and I must say that often when I have been sickened by the stupidity of the mean idiotic rabbit-warrens that rich men build for themselves in Bayswater and elsewhere, I console myself with visions of the noble communal hall of the future, unsparing of materials, generous in worthy ornament, alive with the noblest thoughts of our time, and the past, embodied in the best art which a free and manly people could produce; such an abode of man as no private enterprise could come anywhere near for beauty and fitness, because only collective thought and collective life could cherish the aspirations which would give birth to its beauty, or have the skill and leisure to carry them out. I for my part should think it much the reverse of a hardship if I had to read my books and meet my friends in such a place; nor do I think I am better off to live in a vulgar stuccoed house crowded with upholstery that I despise, in all respects degrading to the mind and enervating to the body to live in, simply because I call it my own, or my house.

It is not an original remark, but I make it here, that my home is where I meet people with whom I sympathize, whom I love.

Well, that is my opinion as a middle-class man. Whether

a working-class man would think his family possession of his wretched little room better than his share of the palace of which I have spoken, I must leave to his opinion, and to the imaginations of the middle-class, who perhaps may sometimes conceive the fact that the said worker is cramped for space and comfort—say on washing-day.

Before I leave this matter of the surroundings of life, I wish to meet a possible objection. I have spoken of machinery being used freely for releasing people from the more mechanical and repulsive part of necessary labour; and I know that to some cultivated people, people of the artistic turn of mind, machinery is particularly distasteful, and they will be apt to say you will never get your surroundings pleasant so long as you are surrounded by machinery. I don't quite admit that; it is the allowing machines to be our masters and not our servants that so injures the beauty of life nowadays. In other words, it is the token of the terrible crime we have fallen into of using our control of the powers of Nature for the purpose of enslaving people, we careless meantime of how much happiness we rob their lives of.

Yet for the consolation of the artists I will say that I believe indeed that a state of social order would probably lead at first to a great development of machinery for really useful purposes, because people will still be anxious about getting through the work necessary to holding society together; but that after a while they will find that there is not so much work to do as they expected, and that then they will have leisure to reconsider the whole subject; and if it seems to them that a certain industry would be carried on more pleasantly as regards the worker, and more effectually as regards the goods, by using hand-work rather than machinery, they will certainly get rid of their machinery, because it will be possible for them to do so. It isn't possible now; we are not at liberty to do so; we are slaves to the monsters which we have created. And I have a kind of hope that the very elaboration of machinery in a society whose purpose is not the multiplication of labour, as it now is, but the carrying on

of a pleasant life, as it would be under social order—that the elaboration of machinery, I say, will lead to the simplification of life, and so once more to the limitation of machinery. How we live and how we might live

Well, I will now let my claims for decent life stand as I have made them. To sum them up in brief, they are: First, a healthy body; second, an active mind in sympathy with the past, the present, and the future; thirdly, occupation fit for a healthy body and an active mind; and fourthly, a beautiful world to live in.

These are the conditions of life which the refined man of all ages has set before him as the thing above all others to be attained. Too often he has been so foiled in their pursuit that he has turned longing eyes backward to the days before civilization, when man's sole business was getting himself food from day to day, and hope was dormant in him, or at least could not be expressed by him.

Indeed, if civilization (as many think) forbids the realization of the hope to obtain such conditions of life, then civilization forbids mankind to be happy; and if that be the case, then let us stifle all aspirations towards progress—nay, all feelings of mutual good-will and affection between men—and snatch each one of us what we can from the heap of wealth that fools create for rogues to grow fat on; or better still, let us as speedily as possible find some means of dying like men, since we are forbidden to live like men.

Rather, however, take courage, and believe that we of this age, in spite of all its torment and disorder, have been born to a wonderful heritage fashioned of the work of those that have gone before us; and that the day of the organization of man is dawning. It is not we who can build up the new social order; the past ages have done the most of that work for us; but we can clear our eyes to the signs of the times, and we shall then see that the attainment of a good condition of life is being made possible for us, and that it is now our business to stretch out our hands to take it.

And how? Chiefly, I think, by educating people to a sense of their real capacities as men, so that they may be able to use

Signs of Change

to their own good the political power which is rapidly being thrust upon them; to get them to see that the old system of organizing labour *for individual profit* is becoming unmanageable, and that the whole people have now got to choose between the confusion resulting from the break up of that system and the determination to take in hand the labour now organized for profit, and use its organization for the livelihood of the community: to get people to see that individual profit-makers are not a necessity for labour but an obstruction to it, and that not only or chiefly because they are the perpetual pensioners of labour, as they are, but rather because of the waste which their existence as a class necessitates. All this we have to teach people, when we have taught ourselves; and I admit that the work is long and burdensome; as I began by saying, people have been made so timorous of change by the terror of starvation that even the unluckiest of them are stolid and hard to move. Hard as the work is, however, its reward is not doubtful. The mere fact that a body of men, however small, are banded together as Socialist missionaries shows that the change is going on. As the working-classes, the real organic part of society, take in these ideas, hope will arise in them, and they will claim changes in society, many of which doubtless will not tend directly towards their emancipation, because they will be claimed without due knowledge of the one thing necessary to claim, *equality of condition;* but which indirectly will help to break up our rotten sham society, while that claim for equality of condition will be made constantly and with growing loudness till it *must* be listened to, and then at last it will only be a step over the border, and the civilized world will be socialized; and, looking back on what has been, we shall be astonished to think of how long we submitted to live as we live now.

WHIGS, DEMOCRATS, & SOCIALISTS*

WHAT is the state of parties in England to-day? How shall we enumerate them? The Whigs, who stand first on the list in my title, are considered generally to be the survival of an old historical party once looked on as having democratic tendencies, but now the hope of all who would stand soberly on the ancient ways. Besides these, there are Tories also, the descendants of the stout defenders of Church and State and the divine right of kings.

Now, I don't mean to say but that at the back of this ancient name of Tory there lies a great mass of genuine Conservative feeling, held by people who, if they had their own way, would play some rather fantastic tricks, I fancy; nay, even might in the course of time be somewhat rough with such people as are in this hall at present.† But this feeling, after all, is only a sentiment now; all practical hope has died out of it, and these worthy people *cannot* have their own way. It is true that they elect members of Parliament, who talk very big to please them, and sometimes even they manage to get a Government into power that nominally represents their sentiment, but when that happens the said

* Read at the Conference convened by the Fabian Society at South Place Institute, June 11, 1886.

† They *have* been "rather rough," you may say, and have done more than merely hold their sentimental position. Well, I still say (February 1888) that the present open tyranny which sends political opponents to prison, both in England and Ireland, and breaks Radical heads in the street for attempting to attend political meetings, is not Tory, but Whig; not the old Tory "divine right of kings," but the new Tory, *i.e.*, Tory-tinted Whig, "divine right of property," made Bloody Sunday possible. I admit that I did not expect in 1886 that we should in 1887 and 1888 be having such a brilliant example of the tyranny of a parliamentary majority; in fact, I did not reckon on the force of the inpenetrable stupidity of the Prigs in alliance with the Whigs marching under the rather ragged banner of sham Toryism.

Government is forced, even when its party has a majority in the House of Commons, to take a much lower standpoint than the high Tory ideal; the utmost that the real Tory party can do, even when backed by the Primrose League and its sham hierarchy, is to delude the electors to return Tories to Parliament to pass measures more akin to Radicalism than the Whigs durst attempt, so that, though there are Tories, there is no Tory party in England.

On the other hand, there is a party, which I can call for the present by no other name than Whig, which is both numerous and very powerful, and which does, in fact, govern England, and to my mind will always do so as long as the present constitutional Parliament lasts. Of course, like all parties it includes men of various shades of opinion, from the Tory-tinted Whiggery of Lord Salisbury to the Radical-tinted Whiggery of Mr. Chamberlain's present tail. Neither do I mean to say that they are conscious of being a united party; on the contrary, the groups will sometimes oppose each other furiously at elections, and perhaps the more simple-minded of them really think that it is a matter of importance to the nation which section of them may be in power; but they may always be reckoned upon to be in their places and vote against any measure which carries with it a real attack on our constitutional system; surely very naturally, since they are there for no other purpose than to do so. They are, and always must be, conscious defenders of the present system, political and economical, as long as they have any cohesion as Tories, Whigs, Liberals, or even Radicals. Not one of them probably would go such a very short journey towards revolution as the abolition of the House of Lords. A one-chamber Parliament would seem to them an impious horror, and the abolition of the monarchy they would consider a serious inconvenience to the London tradesman.

Now this is the real Parliamentary Party, at present divided into jarring sections under the influence of the survival of the party warfare of the last few generations, but

which already shows signs of sinking its differences so as to offer a solid front of resistance to the growing instinct which on its side will before long result in a party claiming full economical as well as political freedom for the whole people. Whigs, Democrats and Socialists

But is there nothing in Parliament, or seeking entrance to it, except this variously tinted Whiggery, this Harlequin of Reaction? Well, inside Parliament, setting aside the Irish party, which is, we may now well hope, merely temporarily there, there is not much. It is not among people of "wealth and local influence," who I see are supposed to be the only available candidates for Parliament of a recognized party, that you will find the elements of revolution. We will grant that there are some few genuine Democrats there, and let them pass. But outside there are undoubtedly many who are genuine Democrats, and who have it in their heads that it is both possible and desirable to capture the constitutional Parliament and turn it into a real popular assembly, which, with the people behind it, might lead us peaceably and constitutionally into the great Revolution which all *thoughtful* men desire to bring about; all thoughtful men, that is, who do not belong to the consciously cynical Tories, *i.e.*, men determined, whether it be just or unjust, good for humanity or bad for it, to keep the people down as long as they can, which they hope, very naturally, will be as long as they live.

To capture Parliament and turn it into a popular but constitutional assembly is, I must conclude, the aspiration of the genuine Democrats wherever they may be found; that is their idea of the first step of the Democratic policy. The questions to be asked of this, as of all other policies, are first, What is the end proposed by it? and secondly, Are they likely to succeed? As to the end proposed, I think there is much difference of opinion. Some Democrats would answer from the merely political point of view, and say: Universal suffrage, payment of members, annual Parliaments, abolition of the House of Lords, abolition of the monarchy, and so forth. I would answer this by saying: After all, these are not ends, but means to an end; and passing by the fact that

the last two are not constitutional measures, and so could not be brought about without actual rebellion, I would say if you had gained all these things, and more, all you would have done would have been to establish the ascendancy of the Democratic party; having so established it, you would then have to find out by the usual party means what that Democratic party meant, and you would find that your triumph in mere politics would lead you back again exactly to the place you started from. You would be Whigs under a different name. Monarchy, House of Lords, pensions, standing army, and the rest of it, are only supports to the present social system—the *privilege* based on the wages and capital system of production—and are worth nothing except as supports to it. If you are determined to support that system, therefore, you had better leave these things alone. The real masters of Society, the real tyrants of the people, are the Landlords and the Capitalists, whom your political triumph would not interfere with.

Then, as now, there would be a proletariat and a moneyed class. Then, as now, it would be possible sometimes for a diligent, energetic man, with his mind set wholly on such success, to climb out of the proletariat into the moneyed class, there to sweat as he once was sweated; which, my friends, is, if you will excuse the word, your ridiculous idea of freedom of contract.

The sole and utmost success of your policy would be that it might raise up a strong opposition to the condition of things which it would be your function to uphold; but most probably such opposition would still be outside Parliament, and not in it; you would have made a revolution, probably not without bloodshed, only to show people the necessity for another revolution the very next day.

Will you think the example of America too trite? Anyhow, consider it! A country with universal suffrage, no king, no House of Lords, no privilege as you fondly think; only a little standing army, chiefly used for the murder of red-skins; a democracy after your model; and with all that, a society

corrupt to the core, and at this moment engaged in suppressing freedom with just the same reckless brutality and blind ignorance as the Czar of all the Russias uses.* Whigs, Democrats and Socialists

But it will be said, and certainly with much truth, that not all the Democrats are for mere political reform. I say that I believe that this is true, and it is a very important truth too. I will go farther, and will say that all those Democrats who can be distinguished from Whigs do intend social reforms which they hope will somewhat alter the relations of the classes towards each other; and there is, generally speaking, amongst Democrats a leaning towards a kind of limited State Socialism, and it is through that that they hope to bring about a peaceful revolution, which, if it does not introduce a condition of equality, will at least make the workers better off and contented with their lot.

They hope to get a body of representatives elected to Parliament, and by them to get measure after measure passed which will tend towards this goal; nor would some of them, perhaps most of them, be discontented if by this means we could glide into complete State Socialism. I think that the present Democrats are widely tinged with this idea, and to me it is a matter of hope that it is so; whatever of error there is in it, it means advance beyond the complete barrenness of the mere political programme.

Yet I must point out to these semi-Socialist Democrats that in the first place they will be made the cat's-paw of some of the wilier of the Whigs. There are several of these measures which look to some Socialistic, as, for instance, the allotments scheme, and other schemes tending toward peasant proprietorship, co-operation, and the like, but which after all, in spite of their benevolent appearance, are really weapons in the hands of reactionaries, having for their real object the creation of a new middle-class made out of the working-class and at their expense; the raising, in short, of a new army against the attack of the disinherited.

* As true now (Feb. 1888) as then: the murder of the Chicago Anarchists, to wit.

There is no end to this kind of dodge, nor will be apparently till there is an end of the class which tries it on; and a great many of the Democrats will be amused and absorbed by it from time to time. They call this sort of nonsense "practical;" it *seems* like doing something, while the steady propaganda of a principle which must prevail in the end is, according to them, doing nothing, and is unpractical. For the rest, it is not likely to become dangerous, further than as it clogs the wheels of the real movement somewhat, because it is sometimes a mere piece of reaction, as when, for instance, it takes the form of peasant proprietorship, flying right in the face of the commercial development of the day, which tends ever more and more towards the aggregation of capital, thereby smoothing the way for the organized possession of the means of production by the workers when the true revolution shall come: while, on the other hand, when this attempt to manufacture a new middle-class takes the form of co-operation and the like, it is not dangerous, because it means nothing more than a slightly altered form of joint-stockery, and everybody almost is beginning to see this. The greed of men stimulated by the spectacle of profit-making all around them, and also by the burden of the interest on the money which they have been obliged to borrow, will not allow them even to approach a true system of co-operation. Those benefited by the transaction presently become eager shareholders in a commercial speculation, and if they are working-men, as they often are, they are also capitalists. The enormous commercial success of the great co-operative societies, and the absolute no-effect of that success on the social conditions of the workers, are sufficient tokens of what this non-political co-operation must come to: "Nothing—it shall not be less."

But again, it may be said, some of the Democrats go farther than this; they take up actual pieces of Socialism, and are more than inclined to support them. Nationalization of the land, or of railways, or cumulative taxation on incomes, or limiting the right of inheritance, or new factory laws, or the

restriction by law of the day's labour—one of these, or more than one sometimes, the Democrats will support, and see absolute salvation in these one or two planks of the platform. All this I admit, and once again say it is a hopeful sign, and yet once again I say there is a snare in it—a snake lies lurking in the grass. Whigs, Democrats and Socialists

Those who think that they can deal with our present system in this piecemeal way very much underrate the strength of the tremendous organization under which we live, and which appoints to each of us his place, and if we do not chance to fit it, grinds us down till we do. Nothing but a tremendous force can deal with this force; it will not suffer itself to be dismembered, nor to lose anything which really is its essence without putting forth all its force in resistance; rather than lose anything which it considers of importance, it will pull the roof of the world down upon its head. For, indeed, I grant these semi-Socialist Democrats that there is one hope for their tampering piecemeal with our Society; if by chance they can excite people into seriously, however blindly, claiming one or other of these things in question, and could be successful in Parliament in driving it through, they would certainly draw on a great civil war, and such a war once let loose would not end but either with the full triumph of Socialism or its extinction for the present; it would be impossible to limit the aim of the struggle; nor can we even guess at the course which it would take, except that it could not be a matter of compromise. But suppose the Democratic party peaceably successful on this new basis of semi-State Socialism, what would it all mean? Attempts to balance the two classes whose interests are opposed to each other, a mere ignoring of this antagonism which has led us through so many centuries to where we are now, and then, after a period of disappointment and disaster, the naked conflict once more; a revolution made, and another immediately necessary on its morrow!

Yet, indeed, it will not come to that; for, whatever may be the aims of the Democrats, they will not succeed in get-

ting themselves into a position from whence they could make the attempt to realize them. I have said there are Tories and yet no real Tory party; so also it seems to me that there are Democrats but no Democratic party; at present they are used by the leaders of the parliamentary factions, and also kept at a distance by them from any real power. If they by hook or crook managed to get a number of members into Parliament, they would find out their differences very speedily under the influence of party rule; in point of fact, the Democrats are not a party; because they have no principles other than the old Whig-Radical ones, extended in some cases so as to take in a little semi-Socialism which the march of events has forced on them—that is, they gravitate on one side to the Whigs and on the other to the Socialists. Whenever, if ever, they begin to be a power in the elections and get members in the House, the temptation to be members of a real live party which may have the government of the country in its hands, the temptation to what is (facetiously, I suppose) called practical politics, will be too much for many, even of those who gravitate towards Socialism: a quasi-Democratic parliamentary party, therefore, would probably be merely a recruiting ground, a nursery for the left wing of the Whigs; though it would indeed leave behind some small nucleus of opposition, the principles of which, however, would be vague and floating, so that it would be but a powerless group after all.

The future of the constitutional Parliament, therefore, it seems to me, is a perpetual Whig Rump, which will yield to pressure when mere political reforms are attempted to be got out of it, but will be quite immovable towards any real change in social and economical matters; that is to say, so far as it may be conscious of the attack; for I grant that it may be *betrayed* into passing semi-State-Socialistic measures, which will do this amount of good, that they will help to entangle commerce in difficulties, and so add to discontent by creating suffering; suffering of which the people will not understand the causes definitely, but which their instinct will tell

them truly is brought about by *government*, and that, too, the only kind of government which they can have so long as the constitutional Parliament lasts. Whigs, Democrats and Socialists

Now, if you think I have exaggerated the power of the Whigs, that is, of solid, dead, unmoving resistance to progress, I must call your attention to the events of the last few weeks. Here has been a measure of pacification proposed; at the least and worst an attempt to enter upon a pacification of a weary and miserable quarrel many centuries old. The British people, in spite of their hereditary prejudice against the Irish, were not averse to the measure; the Tories were, as usual, powerless against it; yet so strong has been the *vis inertiæ* of Whiggery that it has won a notable victory over common-sense and sentiment combined, and has drawn over to it a section of those hitherto known as Radicals, and probably would have drawn all Radicals over but for the personal ascendancy of Mr. Gladstone. The Whigs, seeing, if but dimly, that this Irish Independence meant an attack on property, have been successful in snatching the promised peace out of the people's hands, and in preparing all kinds of entanglement and confusion for us for a long while in their steady resistance to even the beginnings of revolution.

This, therefore, is what Parliament looks to me: a solid central party, with mere nebulous opposition on the right hand and on the left. The people governed; that is to say, fair play amongst themselves for the money-privileged classes to make the most of their privilege, and to fight sturdily with each other in doing so; but the government concealed as much as possible, and also as long as possible; that is to say, the government resting on an assumed necessary eternity of privilege to monopolize the means of the fructification of labour.

For so long as that assumption is accepted by the ignorance of the people, the Great Whig Rump will remain inexpugnable, but as soon as the people's eyes are opened, even partially—and they begin to understand the meaning of the words, the Emancipation of Labour—we shall begin to have

an assured hope of throwing off the basest and most sordid tyranny which the world has yet seen, the tyranny of so-called Constitutionalism.

How, then, are the people's eyes to be opened? By the force evolved from the final triumph and consequent corruption of Commercial Whiggery, which force will include in it a recognition of its constructive activity by intelligent people on the one hand, and on the other half-blind instinctive struggles to use its destructive activity on the part of those who suffer and have not been allowed to think; and, to boot, a great deal that goes between those two extremes.

In this turmoil, all those who can be truly called Socialists will be involved. The modern development of the great class-struggle has forced us to think, our thoughts force us to speak, and our hopes force us to try to get a hearing from the people. Nor can one tell how far our words will carry, so to say. The most moderate exposition of our principles will bear with it the seeds of disruption; nor can we tell what form that disruption will take.

One and all, then, we are responsible for the enunciation of Socialist principles and of the consequences which may flow from their general acceptance, whatever that may be. This responsibility no Socialist can shake off by declarations against physical force and in favour of constitutional methods of agitation; we are attacking the Constitution with the very beginnings, the mere lispings, of Socialism.

Whiggery, therefore, in its various forms, is the representative of Constitutionalism—is the outward expression of monopoly and consequent artificial restraints on labour and life; and there is only one expression of the force which will destroy Whiggery, and that is Socialism; and on the right hand and on the left Toryism and Radicalism will melt into Whiggery—are doing so now—and Socialism has got to absorb all that is not Whig in Radicalism.

Then comes the question, What is the policy of Socialism? If Toryism and Democracy are only nebulous masses of op-

position to the solid centre of Whiggery, what can we call Socialism?

Whigs, Democrats and Socialists

Well, at present, in England at least, Socialism is not a party, but a sect. That is sometimes brought against it as a taunt; but I am not dismayed by it; for I can conceive of a sect—nay, I have heard of *one*—becoming a very formidable power, and becoming so by dint of its long remaining a sect. So I think it is quite possible that Socialism will remain a sect till the very eve of the last stroke that completes the revolution, after which it will melt into the new Society. And is it not sects, bodies of definite, uncompromising principles, that lead us into revolutions? Was it not so in the Cromwellian times? Nay, have not the Fenian sect, even in our own days, made Home Rule possible? They may give birth to parties, though not parties themselves. And what should a sect like we are have to do in the parliamentary struggle—we who have an ideal to keep always before ourselves and others, and who cannot accept compromise; who can see nothing that can give us rest for a minute save the emancipation of labour, which will be brought about by the workers gaining possession of all the means of the fructification of labour; and who, even when that is gained, shall have pure Communism ahead to strive for?

What are we to do, then? Stand by and look on? Not exactly. Yet we may look on other people doing their work while we do ours. They are already beginning, as I have said, to stumble about with attempts at State Socialism. Let them make their experiments and blunders, and prepare the way for us by so doing. And our own business? Well, we—sect or party, or group of self-seekers, madmen, and poets, which you will—are at least the only set of people who have been able to see that there is and has been a great class-struggle going on. Further, we can see that this class-struggle cannot come to an end till the classes themselves do: one class must absorb the other. Which, then? Surely the useful one, the one that the world lives by, and on. The business of the

people at present is to make it impossible for the useless, non-producing class to live; while the business of Constitutionalism is, on the contrary, to make it possible for them to live. And our business is to help to make the people *conscious* of this great antagonism between the people and Constitutionalism; and meantime to let Constitutionalism go on with its government unhelped by us at least, until it at last becomes *conscious* of its burden of the people's hate, of the people's knowledge that it is disinherited, which we shall have done our best to further by any means that we could.

As to Socialists in Parliament, there are two words about that. If they go there to take a part in carrying on Constitutionalism by palliating the evils of the system, and so helping our rulers to bear their burden of government, I for one, and so far as their action therein goes, cannot call them Socialists at all. But if they go there with the intention of doing what they can towards the disruption of Parliament, that is a matter of tactics for the time being; but even here I cannot help seeing the danger of their being seduced from their true errand, and I fear that they might become, on the terms above mentioned, simply supporters of the very thing they set out to undo.

I say that our work lies quite outside Parliament, and it is to help to educate the people by every and any means that may be effective; and the knowledge we have to help them to is threefold—to know their own, to know how to take their own, and to know how to use their own.

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IT is true that the Norman Conquest found a certain kind of feudality in existence in England—a feudality which was developed from the customs of the Teutonic tribes with no admixture of Roman law; and also that even before the Conquest this country was slowly beginning to be mixed up with the affairs of the Continent of Europe, and that not only with the kindred nations of Scandinavia, but with the Romanized countries also. But the Conquest of Duke William did introduce the complete Feudal system into the country; and it also connected it by strong bonds to the Romanized countries, and yet by so doing laid the first foundations of national feeling in England. The English felt their kinship with the Norsemen or the Danes, and did not suffer from their conquests when they had become complete, and when, consequently, mere immediate violence had disappeared from them; their feeling was tribal rather than national; but they could have no sense of tribal unity with the varied populations of the provinces which mere dynastical events had strung together into the dominion, the manor, one may say, of the foreign princes of Normandy and Anjou; and, as the kings who ruled them gradually got pushed out of their French possessions, England began to struggle against the domination of men felt to be foreigners, and so gradually became conscious of her separate nationality, though still only in a fashion, as the manor of an *English* lord.

It is beyond the scope of this piece to give anything like a connected story, even of the slightest, of the course of events between the conquest of Duke William and the fully developed mediæval period of the fourteenth century, which is the England that I have before my eyes as Mediæval or Feudal. That period of the fourteenth century united the developments of the elements which had been stirring in Europe since the final fall of the Roman Empire, and England shared in the general feeling and spirit of the age, although, from its position, the course of its history, and to a

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certain extent the lives of its people, were different. It is to this period, therefore, that I wish in the long run to call your attention, and I will only say so much about the earlier period as may be necessary to explain how the people of England got into the position in which they were found by the Statute of Labourers enacted by Edward III, and the Peasants' Rebellion in the time of his grandson and successor, Richard II.

Undoubtedly, then, the Norman Conquest made a complete break in the continuity of the history of England. When the Londoners after the Battle of Hastings accepted Duke William for their king, no doubt they thought of him as occupying much the same position as that of the newly slain Harold; or at any rate they looked on him as being such a king of England as Knut the Dane, who had also conquered the country; and probably William himself thought no otherwise; but the event was quite different; for on the one hand, not only was he a man of strong character, able, masterful, and a great soldier in the modern sense of the word, but he had at his back his wealthy dukedom of Normandy, which he had himself reduced to obedience and organized; and, on the other hand, England lay before him, unorganized, yet stubbornly rebellious to him; its very disorganization and want of a centre making it more difficult to deal with by merely overrunning it with an army levied for that purpose, and backed by a body of house-carles or guards, which would have been the method of a Scandinavian or native king in dealing with his rebellious subjects. Duke William's necessities and instincts combined led him into a very different course of action, which determined the future destiny of the country. What he did was to quarter upon England an army of feudal vassals drawn from his obedient dukedom, and to hand over to them the lordship of the land of England in return for their military service to him, the suzerain of them all. Thenceforward, it was under the rule of these foreign landlords that the people of England had to develop.

The development of the country as a Teutonic people was checked and turned aside by this event. Duke William

brought, in fact, his Normandy into England, which was thereby changed from a Teutonic people (Old Norse theoð), with the tribal customary law still in use among them, into a province of Romanized Feudal Europe, a piece of France, in short; and though in time she did grow into another England again, she missed for ever in her laws, and still more in her language and her literature, the chance of developing into a great homogeneous Teutonic people infused usefully with a mixture of Celtic blood. Feudal England

However, this step which Duke William was forced to take further influenced the future of the country by creating the great order of the Baronage, and the history of the early period of England is pretty much that of the struggle of the king with the Baronage and the Church. For William fixed the type of the successful English mediæval king, of whom Henry II and Edward I were the most notable examples afterwards. It was, in fact, with him that the struggle towards monarchical bureaucracy began, which was checked by the barons, who extorted Magna Charta from King John, and afterwards by the revolt headed by Simon de Montfort in Henry III's reign; was carried on vigorously by Edward I, and finally successfully finished by Henry VII after the long faction-fight of the Wars of the Roses had weakened the feudal lords so much that they could no longer assert themselves against the monarchy.

As to the other political struggle of the Middle Ages, the contest between the Crown and the Church, two things are to be noted; first, that at least in the earlier period the Church was on the popular side. Thomas Beckett was canonized, it is true, formally and by regular decree; but his memory was held so dear by the people that he would probably have been canonized informally by them if the holy seat at Rome had refused to do so. The second thing to be noted about the dispute is this, that it was no contest of principle. According to the mediæval theory of life and religion, the Church and the State were one in essence, and but separate manifestations of the Kingdom of God upon earth, which was part of the King-

dom of God in heaven. The king was an officer of that realm and a liegeman of God. The doctor of laws and the doctor of physic partook in a degree of the priestly character. On the other hand, the Church was not withdrawn from the every-day life of men; the division into a worldly and spiritual life, neither of which had much to do with the other, was a creation of the protestantism of the Reformation, and had no place in the practice at least of the mediæval Church, which we cannot too carefully remember is little more represented by modern Catholicism than by modern Protestantism. The contest, therefore, between the Crown and the Church was a mere bickering between two bodies, without any essential antagonism between them, as to how far the administration of either reached; neither dreamed of subordinating one to the other, far less of extinguishing one by the other.

The history of the Crusades, by-the-way, illustrates very emphatically this position of the Church in the Middle Ages. The foundation of that strange feudal kingdom of Jerusalem, whose very coat of arms was a solecism in heraldry, whose king had precedence, in virtue of his place as lord of the centre of Christianity, over all other kings and princes; the orders of men-at-arms vowed to poverty and chastity, like the Templars and Knights of St. John; and above all the unquestioning sense of duty that urged men of all classes and kinds into the holy war, show how strongly the idea of God's Kingdom on the earth had taken hold of all men's minds in the early Middle Ages. As to the result of the Crusades, they certainly had their influence on the solidification of Europe and the great feudal system, at the head of which, in theory at least, were the Pope and the Kaiser. For the rest, the intercourse with the East gave Europe an opportunity of sharing in the mechanical civilization of the peoples originally dominated by the Arabs, and infused by the art of Byzantium and Persia, not without some tincture of the cultivation of the latter classical period.

The stir and movement also of the Crusades, and the necessities in which they involved the princes and their barons,

furthered the upward movement of the classes that lay below the feudal vassals, great and little; the principal opportunity for which movement, however, in England, was given by the continuous struggle between the Crown and the Church and Baronage. Feudal England

The early Norman kings, even immediately after the death of the Conqueror, found themselves involved in this struggle, and were forced to avail themselves of the help of what had now become the inferior tribe—the native English, to wit. Henry I, an able and ambitious man, understood this so clearly that he made a distinct bid for the favour of the inferior tribe by marrying an English princess; and it was by means of the help of his English subjects that he conquered his Norman subjects, and the field of Tenchebray, which put the coping-stone on his success, was felt by the English people as an English victory over the oppressing tribe with which Duke William had overwhelmed the English people. It was during this king's reign and under these influences that the trading and industrial classes begin to rise somewhat. The merchant gilds were now in their period of greatest power, and had but just begun, in England at least, to develop into the corporations of the towns; but the towns themselves were beginning to gain their freedom and to become an important element in the society of the time, as little by little they asserted themselves against the arbitrary rule of the feudal lords, lay or ecclesiastical: for as to the latter, it must be remembered that the Church included in herself the orders or classes into which lay society was divided, and while by its lower clergy of the parishes and by the friars it touched the people, its upper clergy were simply feudal lords; and as the religious fervour of the higher clergy, which was marked enough in the earlier period of the Middle Ages (in Anselm, for example), faded out, they became more and more mere landlords, although from the conditions of their landlordism, living as they did on their land and amidst of their tenants, they were less oppressive than the lay landlords.

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The order and progress of Henry I's reign, which marks the transition from the mere military camp of the Conqueror to the mediæval England I have to dwell upon, was followed by the period of mere confusion and misery which accompanied the accession of the princes of Anjou to the throne of England. In this period the barons widely became mere violent and illegal robbers; and the castles with which the land was dotted, and which were begun under the auspices of the Conqueror as military posts, became mere dens of strong-thieves.

No doubt this made the business of the next able king, Henry II, the easier. He was a staunch man of business, and turned himself with his whole soul towards the establishment of order and the consolidation of the monarchy, which accordingly took a great stride under him towards its ultimate goal of bureaucracy. He would probably have carried the business still farther, since in his contest with the Church, in spite of the canonization of Beckett and the king's formal penance at his tomb, he had in fact gained a victory for the Crown which it never really lost again; but in his days England was only a part of the vast dominion of his House, which included more than half of France, and his struggle with his feudatories and the French king, which sowed the seed of the loss of that dominion to the English Crown, took up much of his life, and finally beat him.

His two immediate successors, Richard I and John, were good specimens of the chiefs of their line, almost all of whom were very able men, having even a touch of genius in them, but therewithal were such wanton blackguards and scoundrels that one is almost forced to apply the theological word "wickedness" to them. Such characters belong specially to their times, fertile as they were both of great qualities and of scoundrelism, and in which our own special vice of hypocrisy was entirely lacking. John, the second of these two pests, put the coping-stone on the villainy of his family, and lost his French dominion in the lump.

Under such rascals as these came the turn of the Baron-

age; and they, led by Stephen Langton, the archbishop who had been thrust on the unwilling king by the Pope, united together and forced from him his assent to Magna Charta, the great, thoroughly well-considered deed, which is conventionally called the foundation of English Liberty, but which can only claim to be so on the ground that it was the confirmation and seal of the complete feudal system in England, and put the relations between the vassals, the great feudatories, and the king, on a stable basis; since it created, or at least confirmed, order among these privileged classes, among whom, indeed, it recognized the towns to a certain extent as part of the great feudal hierarchy: so that even by this time they had begun to acquire status in that hierarchy. Feudal England

So John passed away, and became not long after an almost mythical personage, the type of the bad king. There are still ballads, and prose stories deduced from these ballads, in existence, which tell the tale of this strange monster as the English people imagined it.

As they belong to the literature of the fourteenth century, the period I have undertaken to tell you about specially, I will give you one of the latter of these concerning the death of King John, for whom the people imagined a more dramatic cause of death than mere indigestion, of which in all probability he really died; and you may take it for a specimen of popular literature of the fourteenth century.

I can here make bold to quote from memory, without departing very widely from the old text, since the quaint wording of the original, and the spirit of bold and blunt heroism which it breathes, have fixed it in my mind for ever.

The king, you must remember, had halted at Swinestead Abbey, in Lincolnshire, in his retreat from the hostile barons and their French allies, and had lost all his baggage by the surprise of the advancing tide in the Wash; so that he might well be in a somewhat sour mood.

Says the tale: So the king went to meat in the hall, and before him was a loaf, and he looked grimly on it and said, "For how much is such a loaf sold in this realm?"

"Sir, for one penny," said they.

Then the king smote the board with his fist and said, "By God, if I live for one year such a loaf shall be sold for twelve pence!"

That heard one of the monks who stood thereby, and he thought and considered that his hour and time to die was come, and that it would be a good deed to slay so cruel a king and so evil a lord.

So he went into the garden and plucked plums and took out of them the steles (stalks), and did venom in them each one; and he came before the king and sat on his knee, and said:

"Sir, by St. Austin, this is fruit of our garden."

Then the king looked evilly on him and said, "Assay them, monk!"

So the monk took and ate thereof, nor changed countenance any whit: and the king ate thereafter.

But presently afterwards the monk swelled and turned blue, and fell down and died before the king: then waxed the king sick at heart, and he also swelled and died, and so he ended his days.

For a while after the death of John and the accession of Henry III the Baronage, strengthened by the great Charter and with a weak and wayward king on the throne, made their step forward in power and popularity, and the first serious check to the tendency to monarchical bureaucracy, a kind of elementary aristocratic constitution, was imposed upon the weakness of Henry III. Under this movement of the barons, who in their turn had to seek for the support of the people, the towns made a fresh step in advance, and Simon de Montfort, the leader of what for want of a better word must be called the popular party, was forced by his circumstances to summon to his Parliament citizens from the boroughs. Earl Simon was one of those men that come to the front in violent times, and he added real nobility of character to strength of will and persistence. He became the hero of the people, who went near to canonizing him after his death. But the mon-

archy was too strong for him and his really advanced projects, which by no means squared with the hopes of the Baronage in general: and when Prince Edward, afterwards Edward I, grown to his full mental stature, came to the help of the Crown with his unscrupulous business ability, the struggle was soon over; and with Evesham field the monarchy began to take a new stride, and the longest yet taken, towards bureaucracy.

Edward I is remembered by us chiefly for the struggle he carried on with the Scotch Baronage for the feudal suzerainty of that kingdom, and the centuries of animosity between the two countries which that struggle drew on. But he has other claims to our attention besides this.

At first, and remembering the ruthlessness of many of his acts, especially in the Scotch war, one is apt to look upon him as a somewhat pedantic tyrant and a good soldier, with something like a dash of hypocrisy beyond his time added. But, like the Angevine kings I was speaking of just now, he was a completely characteristic product of his time. He was not a hypocrite probably, after all, in spite of his tears shed after he had irretrievably lost a game, or after he had won one by stern cruelty. There was a dash of real romance in him, which mingled curiously with his lawyer-like qualities. He was, perhaps, the man of all men who represented most completely the finished feudal system, and who took it most to heart. His law, his romance, and his religion, his self-command, and his terrible fury, were all a part of this innate feudalism, and exercised within its limits; and we must suppose that he thoroughly felt his responsibility as the chief of his feudatories, while at the same time he had no idea of his having any responsibilities towards the lower part of his subjects. Such a man was specially suited to carrying on the tendency to bureaucratic centralization, which culminated in the Tudor monarchy. He had his struggle with the Baronage, but hard as it was, he was sure not to carry it beyond the due limits of feudalism; to that he was always loyal. He had slain Earl Simon before he was king, while he was

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but his father's general; but Earl Simon's work did not die with him, and henceforward, while the Middle Ages and their feudal hierarchy lasted, it was impossible for either king or barons to do anything which would seriously injure each other's position; the struggle ended in his reign in a balance of power in England which, on the one hand, prevented any great feudatory becoming a rival of the king, as happened in several instances in France, and on the other hand prevented the king lapsing into a mere despotic monarch.

I have said that bureaucracy took a great stride in Edward's reign, but it reached its limits under feudalism as far as the nobles were concerned. Peace and order was established between the different powers of the governing classes; henceforward, the struggle is between them and the governed; that struggle was now to become obvious; the lower tribe was rising in importance; it was becoming richer for fleecing, but also it was beginning to have some power; this led the king first, and afterwards the barons, to attack it definitely; it was rich enough to pay for the trouble of being robbed, and yet not strong enough to defend itself with open success, although the slower and less showy success of growth did not fail it. The instrument of attack in the hands of the barons was the ordinary feudal privilege, the logical carrying out of serfdom; but this attack took place two reigns later. We shall come to that further on. The attack on the lower tribe which was now growing into importance was in this reign made by the king; and his instrument was—Parliament.

I have told you that Simon de Montfort made some attempt to get the burgesses to sit in his Parliament, but it was left to Edward I to lay the foundations firmly of parliamentary representation, which he used for the purpose of augmenting the power of the Crown and crushing the rising liberty of the towns, though of course his direct aim was simply at—money.

The Great Council of the Realm was purely feudal; it was

composed of the feudatories of the king, theoretically of all of them, practically of the great ones only. It was, in fact, the council of the conquering tribe with their chief at its head; the matters of the due feudal tribute, aids, reliefs, fines, scutage, and the like—in short, the king's revenue due from his men—were settled in this council at once and in the lump. But the inferior tribe, though not represented there, existed, and, as aforesaid, was growing rich, and the king had to get their money out of their purses directly; which, as they were not represented at the council, he had to do by means of his officers (the sheriffs) dealing with them one after another, which was a troublesome job; for the men were stiff-necked and quite disinclined to part with their money; and the robbery having to be done on the spot, so to say, encountered all sorts of opposition: and, in fact, it was the money needs both of baron, bishop, and king which had been the chief instrument in furthering the progress of the towns. The towns would be pressed by their lords, king, or baron, or bishop, as it might be, and they would see their advantage and strike a bargain. For you are not to imagine that because there was a deal of violence going on in those times there was no respect for law; on the contrary, there was a quite exaggerated respect for it if it came within the four corners of the feudal feeling, and the result of this feeling of respect was the constant struggle for *status* on the part of the townships and other associations throughout the Middle Ages.

Well, the burghers would say, "'Tis hard to pay this money, but we will put ourselves out to pay it if you will do something for us in return; let, for example, our men be tried in our own court, and the verdict be of one of compurgation instead of wager of battle," and so forth, and so forth.

All this sort of detailed bargaining was, in fact, a safeguard for the local liberties, so far as they went, of the towns and shires, and did not suit the king's views of law and order at all; and so began the custom of the sheriff (the king's officer, who had taken the place of the earl of the Anglo-Saxon period) summoning the burgesses to the council, which bur-

gesses, you must understand, were not elected at the folk-motes of the town, or hundred, but in a sort of hole-and-corner way by a few of the bigger men of the place. What the king practically said was this: "I want your money, and I cannot be for ever wrangling with you stubborn churles at home there, and listening to all your stories of how poor you are, and what you want; no, I want you to be *represented*. Send me up from each one of your communes a man or two whom I can bully or cajole or bribe to sign away your substance for you."

Under these circumstances it is no wonder that the towns were not very eager in the cause of *representation*. It was no easy job to get them to come up to London merely to consult as to the kind of sauce with which they were to be eaten. However, they did come in some numbers, and by the year 1295 something like a shadow of our present Parliament was on foot. Nor need there be much more said about this institution; as time went on its functions got gradually extended by the petition for the redress of grievances accompanying the granting of money, but it was generally to be reckoned on as subservient to the will of the king, who down to the later Tudor period played some very queer tunes on this constitutional instrument.

Edward I gave place to his son, who again was of the type of king who had hitherto given the opportunity to the barons for their turn of advancement in the constitutional struggle; and in earlier times no doubt they would have taken full advantage of the circumstances; as it was they had little to gain. The king did his best to throw off the restraint of the feudal constitution, and to govern simply as an absolute monarch. After a time of apparent success he failed, of course, and only succeeded in confirming the legal rights of feudalism by bringing about his own formal deposition at the hands of the Baronage, as a chief who, having broken the compact with his feudatories, had necessarily forfeited his right. If we compare his case with that of Charles I we shall find this difference in it, besides the obvious one that Edward was

held responsible to his feudatories and Charles towards the upper middle classes, the squirearchy, as represented by Parliament; that Charles was condemned by a law created for the purpose, so to say, and evolved from the principle of the representation of the propertied classes, while Edward's deposition was the real logical outcome of the confirmed feudal system, and was practically legal and regular. Feudal England

The successor of the deposed king, the third Edward, ushers in the complete and central period of the Middle Ages in England. The feudal system is complete: the life and spirit of the country has developed into a condition if not quite independent, yet quite forgetful, on the one hand of the ideas and customs of the Celtic and Teutonic tribes, and on the other of the authority of the Roman Empire. The Middle Ages have grown into manhood; that manhood has an art of its own, which, though developed step by step from that of Old Rome and New Rome, and embracing the strange mysticism and dreamy beauty of the East, has forgotten both its father and its mother, and stands alone triumphant, the loveliest, brightest, and gayest of all the creations of the human mind and hand.

It has a literature of its own too, somewhat akin to its art, yet inferior to it, and lacking its unity, since there is a double stream in it. On the one hand is the court poet, the gentleman, Chaucer, with his Italianizing metres, and his formal recognition of the classical stories; on which, indeed, he builds a superstructure of the quaintest and most unadulterated mediævalism, as gay and bright as the architecture which his eyes beheld and his pen pictured for us, so clear, defined, and elegant it is; a sunny world even amidst its violence and passing troubles, like those of a happy child, the worst of them an amusement rather than a grief to the onlookers; a world that scarcely needed hope in its eager life of adventure and love, amidst the sunlit blossoming meadows, and green woods, and white-begilded manor-houses. A kindly and human muse is Chaucer's, nevertheless, interested in and amused by life, but of her very nature

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devoid of strong aspirations for the future; and that all the more, since, though the strong devotion and fierce piety of the ruder Middle Ages had by this time waned, and the Church was more often lightly mocked at than either feared or loved, still the *habit* of looking on this life as part of another yet remained: the world is fair and full of adventure; kind men and true and noble are in it to make one happy; fools also to laugh at, and rascals to be resisted yet not wholly condemned; and when this world is over we shall still go on living in another which is a part of this. Look at all the picture, note all and live in all, and be as merry as you may, never forgetting that you are alive and that it is good to live.

That is the spirit of Chaucer's poetry; but alongside of it existed yet the ballad poetry of the people, wholly untouched by courtly elegance and classical pedantry; rude in art but never coarse, true to the backbone; instinct with indignation against wrong, and thereby expressing the hope that was in it; a protest of the poor against the rich, especially in those songs of the Foresters, which have been called the mediæval epic of revolt; no more gloomy than the gentleman's poetry, yet cheerful from courage, and not content. Half a dozen stanzas of it are worth a cartload of the whining introspective lyrics of to-day; and he who, when he has mastered the slight differences of language from our own daily speech, is not moved by it, does not understand what true poetry means nor what its aim is.

There is a third element in the literature of this time which you may call Lollard poetry, the great example of which is William Langland's "Piers Plowman." It is no bad corrective to Chaucer, and in *form* at least belongs wholly to the popular side; but it seems to me to show symptoms of the spirit of the rising middle class, and casts before it the shadow of the new master that was coming forward for the workman's oppression. But I must leave what more I have to say on this subject of the art and literature of the fourteenth century for another occasion. In what I have just said, I only wanted to

point out to you that the Middle Ages had by this time come to the fullest growth; and that they could express in a form which was all their own, the ideas and life of the time. Feudal England

That time was in a sense brilliant and progressive, and the life of the worker in it was better than it ever had been, and might compare with advantage with what it became in after periods and with what it is now; and indeed, looking back upon it, there are some minds and some moods that cannot help regretting it, and are not particularly scared by the idea of its violence and its lack of accurate knowledge of scientific detail.

However, one thing is clear to us now, the kind of thing which never is clear to most people living in such periods—namely, that whatever it was, it could not last, but must change into something else.

The complete feudalism of the fourteenth century fell, as systems always fall, by its own corruption, and by development of the innate seeds of change, some of which indeed had lain asleep during centuries, to wake up into activity long after the events which had created them were forgotten.

The feudal system was naturally one of open war; and the alliances, marriages, and other dealings, family with family, made by the king and potentates, were always leading them into war by giving them legal claims, or at least claims that could be legally pleaded, to the domains of other lords, who took advantage of their being on the spot, of their strength in men or money, or their popularity with the Baronage, to give immediate effect to *their* claims. Such a war was that by which Edward I drew on England the enmity of the Scotch; and such again was the great war which Edward III entered into with France. You must not suppose that there was anything in this war of a national, far less of a race, character. The last series of wars before this time I am now speaking of, in which race feelings counted for much, was the Crusades. This French war, I say, was neither national, racial, or tribal; it was the private business of a lord of the manor, claiming what he considered his legal rights of another lord who had,

as he thought, usurped them; and this claim his loyal feudatories were bound to take up for him; loyalty to a feudal superior, not patriotism to a country, was the virtue which Edward III's soldiers had to offer, if they had any call to be virtuous in that respect.

This war once started was hard to drop, partly because of the success that Edward had in it, falling as he did on France with the force of a country so much more homogeneous than it; and no doubt it was a war very disastrous to both countries, and so may be reckoned as amongst the causes which broke up the feudal system.

But the real causes of that break-up lay much deeper than that. The system was not capable of expansion in production; it was, in fact, as long as its integrity remained untouched, an army fed by slaves, who could not be properly and closely exploited; its free men proper might do something else in their leisure, and so produce art and literature, but their true business as members of a conquering tribe, their concerted business, was to fight. There was, indeed, a fringe of people between the serf and the free noble who produced the matters of handicraft which were needed for the latter, but deliberately, and, as we should now think, wastefully; and as these craftsmen and traders began to grow into importance and to push themselves, as they could not help doing, into the feudal hierarchy, as they acquired *status*, so the sickness of the feudal system increased on it, and the shadow of the coming commercialism fell upon it.

That any set of people who could claim to be other than the property of free men should not have definite rights differentiated sharply from those of other groups, was an idea that did not occur to the Middle Ages; therefore, as soon as men came into existence that were not serfs and were not nobles, they had to struggle for *status* by organizing themselves into associations that should come to be acknowledged members of the great feudal hierarchy; for indefinite and negative freedom was not allowed to any person in those

days; if you had not *status* you did not exist except as an outlaw.

This is, briefly speaking, the motive power of necessity that lay behind the struggle of the town corporations and craft-gilds to be free, a struggle which, though it was to result in the breaking up of the mediæval hierarchy, began by an appearance of strengthening it by adding to its members, increasing its power of production, and so making it more stable for the time being.

About this struggle, and the kind of life which accompanied it, I may have to write another time, and so will not say more about it here. Except this, that it was much furthered by the change that gradually took place between the landlords and the class on whom all society rested, the serfs. These at first were men who had no more rights than chattel slaves had, except that mostly, as part of the stock of the manor, they could not be sold off it; they had to do all the work of the manor, and to earn their own livelihood off it as they best could. But as the power of production increased, owing to better methods of working, and as the country got to be more settled, their task-work became easier of performance and their own land more productive to them; and that tendency to the definition and differentiation of rights, moreover, was at work for their benefit, and the custom of the manor defined what their services were, and they began to acquire rights. From that time they ceased to be pure serfs, and began to tend towards becoming tenants, at first paying purely and simply *service* for their holdings, but gradually commuting that service for fines and money payment—for rent, in short.

Towards the close of the fourteenth century, after the country had been depopulated by the Black Death, and impoverished by the long war, the feudal lords of these copyholders and tenants began to regret the slackness with which their predecessors had exploited their *property*, the serfs, and to consider that under the new commercial light which had

begun to dawn upon them *they* could do it much better if they only had their property a little more in hand; but it was too late, for their property had acquired rights, and therewithal had got strange visions into their heads of a time much better than that in which they lived, when even those rights should be supplanted by a condition of things in which the assertion of rights for any one set of men should no longer be needed, since all men should be free to enjoy the fruits of their own labour.

Of that came the great episode of the Peasants' War, led by men like Wat Tyler, Jack Straw, and John Ball, who indeed, with those they led, suffered for daring to be before their time, for the revolt was put down with cruelty worthy of an Irish landlord or a sweating capitalist of the present day; but, nevertheless, serfdom came to an end in England, if not because of the revolt, yet because of the events that made it, and thereby a death-wound was inflicted on the feudal system.

From that time onward the country, passing through the various troubles of a new French war of Henry V's time, and the War of the Roses, did not heed these faction fights much.

The workmen grew in prosperity, but also they began to rise into a new class, and a class beneath them of mere labourers who were not serfs began to form, and to lay the foundations of capitalistic production.

England got carried into the rising current of commercialism, and the rich men and landlords to turn their attention to the production of profit instead of the production of livelihood; the gildless journeyman and the landless labourer slowly came into existence; the landlord got rid of his tenants all he could, turned tillage into pasture, and sweated the pastures to death in his eagerness for wool, which for him meant money and the breeding of money; till at last the place of the serf, which had stood empty, as it were, during a certain transition period, during which the non-capitalistic production was expanding up to its utmost limit, was filled by

the proletarian working for the service of a master in a new fashion, a fashion which exploited and (woe worth the while!) exploits him very much more completely than the customs of the manor of the feudal period. Feudal England

The life of the worker and the production of goods in this transition period, when Feudal society was sickening for its end, is a difficult and wide subject that requires separate treatment; at present I will leave the mediæval workman at the full development of that period which found him a serf bound to the manor, and which left him generally a yeoman or an artisan sharing the collective *status* of his gild.

The workman of to-day, if he could realize the position of his forerunner, has some reason to envy him: the feudal serf worked hard, and lived poorly, and produced a rough livelihood for his master; whereas the modern workman, working harder still, and living little if any better than the serf, produces for his master a state of luxury of which the old lord of the manor never dreamed. The workman's powers of production are multiplied a thousandfold; his own livelihood remains pretty much where it was. The balance goes to his master and the crowd of useless, draggled-tailed knaves and fools who pander to his idiotic sham desires, and who, under the pretentious title of the intellectual part of the middle classes, have in their turn taken the place of the mediæval jester.

Truly, if the Positivist motto, "Live for others," be taken in stark literality, the modern workman should be a good and wise man, since he has no chance of living for himself!

And yet, I wish he were wiser still: wise enough to make an end of the preaching of "Live *on* others," which is the motto set forth by commercialism to her favoured children.

Yet in one thing the modern proletarian has an advantage over the mediæval serf, and that advantage is a world in itself. Many a century lay between the serf and successful revolt, and though he tried it many a time and never lost heart, yet the coming change which his martyrdom helped on was not to be for him yet, but for the new masters of his successors.

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With us it is different. A few years of wearisome struggle against apathy and ignorance; a year or two of growing hope —and then who knows? Perhaps a few months, or perhaps a few days of the open struggle against brute force, with the mask off its face, and the sword in its hand, and then we are over the bar.

Who knows, I say? Yet this we know, that ahead of us, with nothing betwixt us except such incidents as are necessary to its development, lies the inevitable social revolution, which will bring about the end of mastery and the triumph of fellowship.

THE HOPES OF CIVILIZATION

EVERY age has had its hopes, hopes that look to something beyond the life of the age itself, hopes that try to pierce into the future; and, strange to say, I believe that those hopes have been stronger not in the heyday of the epoch which has given them birth, but rather in its decadence and times of corruption: in sober truth it may well be that these hopes are but a reflection in those that live happily and comfortably of the vain longings of those others who suffer with little power of expressing their sufferings in an audible voice: when all goes well the happy world forgets these people and their desires, sure as it is that their woes are not dangerous to them the wealthy: whereas when the woes and grief of the poor begin to rise to a point beyond the endurance of men, fear conscious or unconscious falls upon the rich, and they begin to look about them to see what there may be among the elements of their society which may be used as palliatives for the misery which, long existing and ever growing greater among the slaves of that society, is now at last forcing itself on the attention of the masters. Times of change, disruption, and revolution are naturally times of hope also, and not seldom the hopes of something better to come are the first tokens that tell people that revolution is at hand, though commonly such tokens are no more believed than Cassandra's prophecies, or are even taken in a contrary sense by those who have anything to lose; since they look upon them as signs of the prosperity of the times, and the long endurance of that state of things which is so kind to them. Let us then see what the hopes of civilization are like to-day: for indeed I purpose speaking of our own times chiefly, and will leave for the present all mention of that older civilization which was destroyed by the healthy barbarism out of which our present society has grown.

Yet a few words may be necessary concerning the birth of our present epoch and the hopes it gave rise to, and what has become of them: that will not take us very far back in history;

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as to my mind our modern civilization begins with the stirring period about the time of the Reformation in England, the time which in the then more important countries of the Continent is known as the period of the Renaissance, the so-called new birth of art and learning.

And first remember that this period includes the death-throes of feudalism, with all the good and evil which that system bore with it. For centuries past its end was getting ready by the gradual weakening of the bonds of the great hierarchy which held men together: the characteristics of those bonds were, theoretically at least, personal rights and personal duties between superior and inferior all down the scale; each man was born, so to say, subject to these conditions, and the mere accidents of his life could not free him from them: commerce, in our sense of the word, there was none; capitalistic manufacture, capitalistic exchange was unknown: to buy goods cheap that you might sell them dear was a legal offence (forestalling): to buy goods in the market in the morning and to sell them in the afternoon in the same place was not thought a useful occupation and was forbidden under the name of regrating; usury, instead of leading as now directly to the highest offices of the State, was thought wrong, and the profit of it mostly fell to the chosen people of God: the robbery of the workers, thought necessary then as now to the very existence of the State, was carried out quite crudely without any concealment or excuse by arbitary taxation or open violence: on the other hand, life was easy, and common necessaries plenteous; the holidays of the Church were holidays in the modern sense of the word, downright play-days, and there were ninety-six obligatory ones: nor were the people tame and sheep-like, but as rough-handed and bold a set of good fellows as ever rubbed through life under the sun.

I remember three passages, from contemporary history or gossip, about the life of those times which luck has left us, and which illustrate curiously the change that has taken place in the habits of Englishmen. A lady writing from Norfolk

400 years ago to her husband in London, amidst various commissions for tapestries, groceries, and gowns, bids him also not to forget to bring back with him a good supply of cross-bows and bolts, since the windows of their hall were too low to be handy for long-bow shooting. A German traveller, writing quite at the end of the mediæval period, speaks of the English as the laziest and proudest people and the best cooks in Europe. A Spanish ambassador about the same period says, "These English live in houses built of sticks and mud,* but therein they fare as plenteously as lords."

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Indeed, I confess that it is with a strange emotion that I recall these times and try to realize the life of our forefathers, men who were named like ourselves, spoke nearly the same tongue, lived on the same spots of earth, and therewithal were as different from us in manners, habits, ways of life and thought, as though they lived in another planet. The very face of the country has changed; not merely I mean in London and the great manufacturing centres, but through the country generally; there is no piece of English ground, except such places as Salisbury Plain, but bears witness to the amazing change which 400 years has brought upon us.

Not seldom I please myself with trying to realize the face of mediæval England; the many chases and great woods, the stretches of common tillage and common pasture quite unenclosed; the rough husbandry of the tilled parts, the unimproved breeds of cattle, sheep, and swine; especially the latter, so lank and long and lathy, looking so strange to us; the strings of packhorses along the bridle-roads, the scantiness of the wheel-roads, scarce any except those left by the Romans, and those made from monastery to monastery: the scarcity of bridges, and people using ferries instead, or fords where they could; the little towns, well bechurched, often walled; the villages just where they are now (except for those that have nothing but the church left to tell of them), but better and more populous; their churches, some big and

* I suppose he was speaking of the frame houses of Kent.

handsome, some small and curious, but all crowded with altars and furniture, and gay with pictures and ornament; the many religious houses, with their glorious architecture; the beautiful manor-houses, some of them castles once, and survivals from an earlier period; some new and elegant; some out of all proportion small for the importance of their lords. How strange it would be to us if we could be landed in fourteenth century England! Unless we saw the crest of some familiar hill, like that which yet bears upon it a symbol of an English tribe, and from which, looking down on the plain where Alfred was born, I once had many such ponderings, we should not know into what country of the world we were come: the name is left, scarce a thing else.

And when I think of this it quickens my hope of what may be: even so it will be with us in time to come; all will have changed, and another people will be dwelling here in England, who, although they may be of our blood and bear our name, will wonder how we lived in the nineteenth century.

Well, under all that rigidly ordered caste society of the fourteenth century, with its rough plenty, its sauntering life, its cool acceptance of rudeness and violence, there was going on a keen struggle of classes which carried with it the hope of progress of those days: the serfs gradually getting freed, and becoming some of them the town population, the first journeymen, or "free-labourers," so called, some of them the copyholders of agricultural land: the corporations of the towns gathered power, the craft-gilds grew into perfection and corruption, the power of the Crown increased, attended with nascent bureaucracy; in short, the middle class was forming underneath the outward show of feudalism still intact: and all was getting ready for the beginning of the great commercial epoch in whose *latter* days I would fain hope we are living. That epoch began with the portentous change of agriculture which meant cultivating for profit instead of for livelihood, and which carried with it the expropriation of the *people* from the land, the extinction of the yeoman, and the rise of the capitalist farmer; and the

growth of the town population, which, swelled by the drift of the landless vagabonds and masterless men, grew into a definite proletariat or class of free-workmen; and their existence made that of the embryo capitalist-manufacturer also possible; and the reign of commercial contract and cash payment began to take the place of the old feudal hierarchy, with its many-linked chain of personal responsibilities. The latter half of the seventeenth century, the reign of Charles II, saw the last blow struck at this feudal system, when the landowners' military service was abolished, and they became simple owners of property that had no duties attached to it save the payment of a land-tax.

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The hopes of the early part of the commercial period may be read in almost every book of the time, expressed in various degrees of dull or amusing pedantry, and show a naïf arrogance and contempt of the times just past through which nothing but the utmost simplicity of ignorance could have attained to. But the times were stirring, and gave birth to the most powerful individualities in many branches of literature, and More and Campanella, at least from the midst of the exuberant triumph of young commercialism, gave to the world prophetic hopes of times yet to come when that commercialism itself should have given place to the society which we hope will be the next transform of civilization into something else: into a new social life.

This period of early and exuberant hopes passed into the next stage of sober realization of many of them, for commerce grew and grew, and moulded all society to its needs: the workman of the sixteenth century worked still as an individual with little co-operation, and scarce any division of labour: by the end of the seventeenth he had become only a part of a group which by that time was in the handicrafts the real unit of production; division of labour even at that period had quite destroyed his individuality, and the worker was but part of a machine: all through the eighteenth century this system went on progressing towards perfection, till to most men of that period, to most of those who were in any way

capable of expressing their thoughts, civilization had already reached a high stage of perfection, and was certain to go on from better to better.

These hopes were not on the surface of a very revolutionary kind, but nevertheless the class struggle still went on, and quite openly too; for the remains of feudality, aided by the mere mask and grimace of the religion which was once a real part of the feudal system, hampered the progress of commerce sorely, and seemed a thousandfold more powerful than it really was; because in spite of the class struggle there was really a covert alliance between the powerful middle classes who were the children of commerce and their old masters the aristocracy; an unconscious understanding between them rather, in the midst of their contest, that certain matters were to be respected even by the advanced party. The contest and civil war between the king and the commons in England in the seventeenth century illustrate this well: the caution with which privilege was attacked in the beginning of the struggle, the unwillingness of all the leaders save a few enthusiasts to carry matters to their logical consequences, even when the march of events had developed the antagonism between aristocratic privilege and middle-class freedom of contract (so called); finally, the crystallization of the new order conquered by the sword of Naseby into a mongrel condition of things between privilege and bourgeois freedom, the defeat and grief of the purist Republicans, and the horror at and swift extinction of the Levellers, the pioneers of Socialism in that day, all point to the fact that the "party of progress," as we should call it now, was determined after all that privilege should not be abolished further than its own standpoint.

The seventeenth century ended in the great Whig revolution in England, and, as I said, commerce throve and grew enormously, and the power of the middle classes increased proportionately and all things seemed going smoothly with them, till at last in France the culminating corruption of a society still nominally existing for the benefit of the privi-

leged aristocracy, forced their hand: the old order of things, backed as it was by the power of the executive, by that semblance of overwhelming physical force which is the real and only cement of a society founded on the slavery of the many —the aristocratic power—seemed strong and almost inexpugnable: and since any stick will do to beat a dog with, the middle classes in France were forced to take up the first stick that lay ready to hand if they were not to give way to the aristocrats, which indeed the whole evolution of history forbade them to do. Therefore, as in England in the seventeenth century, the middle classes allied themselves to religious and republican, and even communistic enthusiasts, with the intention, firm though unexpressed, to keep them down when they had mounted to power by their means, so in France they had to ally themselves with the proletariat; which, shamefully oppressed and degraded as it had been, now for the first time in history began to feel its power, the power of numbers: by means of this help they triumphed over aristocratic privilege, but, on the other hand, although the proletariat was speedily reduced again to a position not much better than that it had held before the revolution, the part it played therein gave a new and terrible character to that revolution, and from that time forward the class struggle entered on to a new phase; the middle classes had gained a complete victory, which in France carried with it all the outward signs of victory, though in England they chose to consider a certain part of themselves an aristocracy, who had indeed little signs of aristocracy about them either for good or for evil, being in very few cases of long descent, and being in their manners and ideas unmistakably *bourgeois*.

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So was accomplished the second act of the great class struggle with whose first act began the age of commerce; as to the hopes of this period of the revolution we all know how extravagant they were; what a complete regeneration of the world was expected to result from the abolition of the grossest form of privilege; and I must say that, before we mock at the extravagance of those hopes, we should try to put our-

selves in the place of those that held them, and try to conceive how the privilege of the old noblesse must have galled the respectable well-to-do people of that time. Well, the reasonable part of those hopes were realized by the revolution; in other words, it accomplished what it really aimed at, the freeing of commerce from the fetters of sham feudality; or, in other words, the destruction of aristocratic privilege. The more extravagant part of the hopes expressed by the eighteenth century revolution were vague enough, and tended in the direction of supposing that the working classes would be benefited by what was to the interest of the middle class in some way quite unexplained—by a kind of magic, one may say—which welfare of the workers, as it was never directly aimed at, but only hoped for by the way, so also did not come about by any such magical means, and the triumphant middle classes began gradually to find themselves looked upon no longer as rebellious servants, but as oppressive masters.

The middle class had freed commerce from her fetters of privilege, and had freed thought from her fetters of theology, at least partially; but it had not freed, nor attempted to free, labour from its fetters. The leaders of the French Revolution, even amidst the fears, suspicions, and slaughter of the Terror, upheld the rights of "property" so called, though a new pioneer or prophet appeared in France, analogous in some respects to the Levellers of Cromwell's time, but, as might be expected, far more advanced and reasonable than they were. Gracchus Babeuf and his fellows were treated as criminals, and died or suffered the torture of prison for attempting to put into practice those words which the Republic still carried on its banners, and Liberty, Fraternity, and Equality were interpreted in a middle-class, or if you please a Jesuitical, sense, as the rewards of success for those who could struggle into an exclusive class; and at last property had to be defended by a military adventurer, and the Revolution seemed to have ended with Napoleonism.

Nevertheless, the Revolution was not dead, nor was it possible to say thus far and no further to the rising tide.

Commerce, which had created the propertyless proletariat throughout civilization, had still another part to play, which is not yet played out; she had and has to teach the workers to know what they are; to educate them, to consolidate them, and not only to give them aspirations for their advancement as a class, but to make means for them to realize those aspirations. All this she did, nor loitered in her work either; from the beginning of the nineteenth century the history of civilization is really the history of the last of the class-struggles which was inaugurated by the French Revolution; and England, who all through the times of the Revolution and the Cæsarism which followed it appeared to be the steady foe of Revolution, was really as steadily furthering it; her natural conditions, her store of coal and minerals, her temperate climate, extensive sea-board and many harbours, and lastly her position as the outpost of Europe looking into America across the ocean, doomed her to be for a time at least the mistress of the commerce of the civilized world, and its agent with barbarous and semi-barbarous countries. The necessities of this destiny drove her into the implacable war with France, a war which, nominally waged on behalf of monarchical principles, was really, though doubtless unconsciously, carried on for the possession of the foreign and colonial markets. She came out victorious from that war, and fully prepared to take advantage of the industrial revolution which had been going on the while, and which I now ask you to note.

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I have said that the eighteenth century perfected the system of labour which took the place of the mediæval system, under which a workman individually carried his piece of work all through its various stages from the first to the last.

This new system, the first change in industrial production since the Middle Ages, is known as the system of division of labour, wherein, as I said, the unit of labour is a group, not a man; the individual workman in this system is kept life-long at the performance of some task quite petty in itself, and which he soon masters, and having mastered it has nothing

more to do but to go on increasing his speed of hand under the spur of competition with his fellows, until he has become the perfect machine which it is his ultimate duty to become, since without attaining to that end he must die or become a pauper. You can well imagine how this glorious invention of division of labour, this complete destruction of individuality in the workman, and his apparent hopeless enslavement to his profit-grinding master, stimulated the hopes of civilization; probably more hymns have been sung in praise of division of labour, more sermons preached about it, than have done homage to the precept, "do unto others as ye would they should do unto you."

To drop all irony, surely this was one of those stages of civilization at which one might well say that, if it was to stop there, it was a pity that it had ever got so far. I have had to study books and methods of work of the eighteenth century a good deal, French chiefly; and I must say that the impression made on me by that study is that the eighteenth century artisan must have been a terrible product of civilization, and quite in a condition to give rise to *hopes*—of the torch, the pike, and the guillotine.

However, civilization was not going to stop there; having turned the man into a machine, the next stage for commerce to aim at was to contrive machines which would widely dispense with human labour; nor was this aim altogether disappointed.

Now, at first sight it would seem that having got the workman into such a plight as he was, as the slave of division of labour, this new invention of machines which should free him from a part of his labour at least, could be nothing to him but an unmixed blessing. Doubtless it will prove to have been so in the end, when certain institutions have been swept away which most people now look on as eternal; but a longish time has passed during which the workman's hopes of civilization have been disappointed, for those who invented the machines, or rather who profited by their invention, did not aim at the saving of labour in the sense of reducing the labour

which each man had to do, but, first taking it for granted that every workman would have to work as long as he could stand up to it, aimed, under those conditions of labour, at producing the utmost possible amount of goods which they could sell at a profit. The Hopes of Civilization

Need I dwell on the fact that, under these circumstances, the invention of the machines has benefited the workman but little even to this day?

Nay, at first they made his position worse than it had been: for, being thrust on the world very suddenly, they distinctly brought about an industrial revolution, changing everything suddenly and completely; industrial productiveness was increased prodigiously, but so far from the workers reaping the benefit of this, they were thrown out of work in enormous numbers, while those who were still employed were reduced from the position of skilled artisans to that of unskilled labourers: the aims of their masters being, as I said, to make a profit, they did not trouble themselves about this as a class, but took it for granted that it was something that couldn't be helped and didn't hurt *them:* nor did they think of offering to the workers that compensation for harassed interests which they have since made a point of claiming so loudly for themselves.

This was the state of things which followed on the conclusion of European peace, and even that peace itself rather made matters worse than better, by the sudden cessation of all war industries, and the throwing on to the market many thousands of soldiers and sailors: in short, at no period of English history was the condition of the workers worse than in the early years of the nineteenth century.

There seem during this period to have been two currents of hope that had reference to the working classes: the first affected the masters, the second the men.

In England, and, in what I am saying of this period, I am chiefly thinking of England, the hopes of the richer classes ran high; and no wonder; for England had by this time become the mistress of the markets of the world, and also, as

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the people of that period were never weary of boasting, the workshop of the world: the increase in the riches of the country was enormous, even at the early period I am thinking of now—prior to '48, I mean—though it increased much more speedily in times that we have all seen: but part of the jubilant hopes of this newly rich man concerned his servants, the instruments of his fortune: it was hoped that the population in general would grow wiser, better educated, thriftier, more industrious, more comfortable; for which hope there was surely some foundation, since man's mastery over the forces of Nature was growing yearly towards completion; but you see these benevolent gentlemen supposed that these hopes would be realized perhaps by some unexplained magic as aforesaid, or perhaps by the working-classes, *at their own expense*, by the exercise of virtues supposed to be specially suited to their condition, and called, by their masters, "thrift" and "industry." For this latter supposition there was no foundation: indeed, the poor wretches who were thrown out of work by the triumphant march of commerce had perforce worn thrift threadbare, and could hardly better their exploits in *that* direction; while as to those who worked in the factories, or who formed the fringe of labour elsewhere, industry was no new gospel to them, since they already worked as long as they could work without dying at the loom, the spindle, or the stithy. They for their part had their hopes, vague enough as to their ultimate aim, but expressed in the passing day by a very obvious tendency to revolt: this tendency took various forms, which I cannot dwell on here, but settled down at last into Chartism: about which I must speak a few words. But first I must mention, I can scarce do more, the honoured name of Robert Owen, as representative of the nobler hopes of his day, just as More was of his, and the lifter of the torch of Socialism amidst the dark days of the confusion consequent on the reckless greed of the early period of the great factory industries.

That the conditions under which man lived could affect his life and his deeds infinitely, that not selfish greed and

ceaseless contention, but brotherhood and co-operation were the bases of true society, was the gospel which he preached and also practised with a single-heartedness, devotion, and fervour of hope which have never been surpassed: he was the embodied hope of the days when the advance of knowledge and the sufferings of the people thrust revolutionary hope upon those thinkers who were not in some form or other in the pay of the sordid masters of society.

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As to the Chartist agitation, there is this to be said of it, that it was thoroughly a working-class movement, and it was caused by the simplest and most powerful of all causes—hunger. It is noteworthy that it was strongest, especially in its earlier days, in the Northern and Midland manufacturing districts—that is, in the places which felt the distress caused by the industrial revolution most sorely and directly; it sprang up with particular vigour in the years immediately following the great Reform Bill; and it has been remarked that disappointment of the hopes which that measure had cherished had something to do with its bitterness. As it went on, obvious causes for failure were developed in it; self-seeking leadership; futile discussion of the means of making the change, before organization of the party was perfected; blind fear of ultimate consequences on the part of some, blind disregard to immediate consequences on the part of others; these were the surface reasons for its failure: but it would have triumphed over all these and accomplished revolution in England, if it had not been for causes deeper and more vital than these. Chartism differed from mere Radicalism in being a class movement; but its aim was after all political rather than social. The Socialism of Robert Owen fell short of its object because it did not understand that, as long as there is a privileged class in possession of the executive power, they will take good care that their economical position, which enables them to live on the unpaid labour of the people, is not tampered with: the hopes of the Chartists were disappointed because they did not understand that true political freedom is impossible to people who are economic-

ally enslaved: there is no first and second in these matters, the two must go hand in hand together: we cannot live as we will, and as we should, as long as we allow people to *govern* us whose interest it is that we should live as *they* will, and by no means as we should; neither is it any use claiming the right to manage our own business unless we are prepared to have some business of our own: these two aims united mean the furthering of the class struggle till all classes are abolished —the divorce of one from the other is fatal to any hope of social advancement.

Chartism therefore, though a genuine popular movement, was incomplete in its aims and knowledge; the time was not yet come and it could not triumph openly; but it would be a mistake to say that it failed utterly: at least it kept alive the holy flame of discontent; it made it possible for us to attain to the political goal of democracy, and thereby to advance the cause of the people by the gain of a stage from whence could be seen the fresh gain to be aimed at.

I have said that the time for revolution had not then come: the great wave of commercial success went on swelling, and though the capitalists would if they had dared have engrossed the whole of the advantages thereby gained at the expense of their wage slaves, the Chartist revolt warned them that it was not safe to attempt it. They were *forced* to try to allay discontent by palliative measures. They had to allow Factory Acts to be passed regulating the hours and conditions of labour of women and children, and consequently of men also in some of the more important and consolidated industries; they were *forced* to repeal the ferocious laws against combination among the workmen; so that the Trades Unions won for themselves a legal position and became a power in the labour question, and were able by means of strikes and threats of strikes to regulate the wages granted to the workers, and to raise the standard of livelihood for a certain part of the skilled workmen and the labourers associated with them: though the main part of the unskilled,

including the agricultural workmen, were no better off than before.

Thus was damped down the flame of a discontent vague in its aims, and passionately crying out for what, if granted, it could not have used: twenty years ago any one hinting at the possibility of serious class discontent in this country would have been looked upon as a madman; in fact, the well-to-do and cultivated were quite unconscious (as many still are) that there was any class distinction in this country other than what was made by the rags and cast clothes of feudalism, which in a perfunctory manner they still attacked.

There was no sign of revolutionary feeling in England twenty years ago: the middle class were so rich that they had no need to hope for anything—but a heaven which they did not believe in: the well-to-do working men did not hope, since they were not pinched and had no means of learning their degraded position: and lastly, the drudges of the proletariat had such hope as charity, the hospital, the workhouse, and kind death at last could offer them.

In this stock-jobbers' heaven let us leave our dear countrymen for a little, while I say a few words about the affairs of the people on the continent of Europe. Things were not quite so smooth for the fleecer there: Socialist thinkers and writers had arisen about the same time as Robert Owen; St. Simon, Proudhon, Fourier and his followers kept up the traditions of hope in the midst of a *bourgeois* world. Amongst these Fourier is the one that calls for most attention: since his doctrine of the necessity and possibility of making labour attractive is one which Socialism can by no means do without. France also kept up the revolutionary and insurrectionary tradition, the result of something like hope still fermenting amongst the proletariat: she fell at last into the clutches of a second Cæsarism developed by the basest set of sharpers, swindlers, and harlots that ever insulted a country, and of whom our own happy *bourgeois* at home made heroes and heroines: the hideous open corruption of Parisian society,

to which, I repeat, our respectable classes accorded heartfelt sympathy, was finally swept away by the horrors of a race war: the defeats and disgraces of this war developed, on the one hand, an increase in the wooden implacability and baseness of the French *bourgeois*, but on the other made way for revolutionary hope to spring again, from which resulted the attempt to establish society on the basis of the freedom of labour, which we call the Commune of Paris of 1871. Whatever mistakes or imprudences were made in this attempt, and all wars blossom thick with such mistakes, I will leave the reactionary enemies of the people's cause to put forward: the immediate and obvious result was the slaughter of thousands of brave and honest revolutionists at the hands of the respectable classes, the loss in fact of an army for the popular cause. But we may be sure that the results of the Commune will not stop there: to all Socialists that heroic attempt will give hope and ardour in the cause as long as it is to be won; we feel as though the Paris workman had striven to bring the day-dawn for us, and had lifted us the sun's rim over the horizon, never to set in utter darkness again: of such attempts one must say, that though those who perished in them might have been put in a better place in the battle, yet after all brave men never die for nothing, when they die for principle.

Let us shift from France to Germany before we get back to England again, and conclude with a few words about our hopes at the present day. To Germany we owe the school of economists, at whose head stands the name of Karl Marx, who have made modern Socialism what it is: the earlier Socialist writers and preachers based their hopes on man being taught to see the desirableness of co-operation taking the place of competition, and adopting the change voluntarily and consciously, and they trusted to schemes more or less artificial being tried and accepted, although such schemes were necessarily constructed out of the materials which capitalistic society offered: but the new school, starting with an historical view of what had been, and

seeing that a law of evolution swayed all events in it, was able to point out to us that the evolution was still going on, and that, whether Socialism be desirable or not, it is at least inevitable. Here then was at last a hope of a different kind to any that had gone before it; and the German and Austrian workmen were not slow to learn the lesson founded on this theory; from being one of the most backward countries in Europe in the movement, before Lassalle started his German workman's party in 1863, Germany soon became the leader in it: Bismarck's repressive law has only acted on opinion there, as the roller does to the growing grass—made it firmer and stronger; and whatever vicissitudes may be the fate of the party as a party, there can be no doubt that Socialistic opinion is firmly established there, and that when the time is ripe for it that opinion will express itself in action.

The Hopes of Civilization

Now, in all I have been saying, I have been wanting you to trace the fact that, ever since the establishment of commercialism on the ruins of feudality, there has been growing a steady feeling on the part of the workers that they are a class dealt with as a class, and in like manner to deal with others; and that as this class feeling has grown, so also has grown with it a consciousness of the antagonism between their class and the class which employs it, as the phrase goes; that is to say, which lives by means of its labour.

Now it is just this growing consciousness of the fact that as long as there exists in society a propertied class living on the labour of a propertyless one, there *must* be a struggle always going on between those two classes—it is just the dawning knowledge of this fact which should show us what civilization can hope for—namely, transformation into true society, in which there will no longer be classes with their necessary struggle for existence and superiority: for the antagonism of classes which began in all simplicity between the master and the chattel slave of ancient society, and was continued between the feudal lord and the serf of mediæval society, has gradually become the contention between the capitalist developed from the workmen of the

last-named period, and the wage-earner: in the former struggle the rise of the artisan and villenage tenant created a new class, the middle class, while the place of the old serf was filled by the propertyless labourer, with whom the middle class, which has absorbed the aristocracy, is now face to face: the struggle between the classes therefore is once again a simple one, as in the days of the classical peoples; but since there is no longer any strong race left out of civilization, as in the time of the disruption of Rome, the whole struggle in all its simplicity between those who have and those who lack is *within* civilization.

Moreover, the capitalist or modern slave-owner has been forced by his very success, as we have seen, to organize his slaves, the wage-earners, into a co-operation for production so well arranged that it requires little but his own elimination to make it a foundation for communal life: in the teeth also of the experience of past ages, he has been compelled to allow a modicum of education to the propertyless, and has not even been able to deprive them wholly of political rights; his own advance in wealth and power has bred for him the very enemy who is doomed to make an end of him.

But will there be any new class to take the place of the present proletariat when that has triumphed, as it must do, over the present privileged class? We cannot foresee the future, but we may fairly hope not: at least we cannot see any signs of such a new class forming. It is impossible to see how destruction of privilege can stop short of absolute equality of condition; pure Communism is the logical deduction from the imperfect form of the new society, which is generally differentiated from it as Socialism.

Meantime, it is this simplicity and directness of the growing contest which above all things presents itself as a terror to the conservative instinct of the present day. Many among the middle class who are sincerely grieved and shocked at the condition of the proletariat which civilization has created, and even alarmed by the frightful inequalities which it fosters, do nevertheless shudder back from the idea of the class

struggle, and strive to shut their eyes to the fact that it is going on. They try to think that peace is not only possible, but natural, between the two classes, the very essence of whose existence is that each can only thrive by what it manages to force the other to yield to it. They propose to themselves the impossible problem of raising the inferior or exploited classes into a position in which they will cease to struggle against the superior classes, while the latter will not cease to exploit them. This absurd position drives them into the concoction of schemes for bettering the condition of the working classes at their own expense, some of them futile, some merely fantastic; or they may be divided again into those which point out the advantages and pleasures of involuntary asceticism, and reactionary plans for importing the conditions of the production and life of the Middle Ages (wholly misunderstood by them, by the way) into the present system of the capitalist farmer, the great industries, and the universal world-market. Some see a solution of the social problem in sham co-operation, which is merely an improved form of joint-stockery: others preach thrift to (precarious) incomes of eighteen shillings a week, and industry to men killing themselves by inches in working overtime, or to men whom the labour-market has rejected as not wanted: others beg the proletarians not to breed so fast; an injunction the compliance with which might be at first of advantage to the proletarians themselves in their present condition, but would certainly undo the capitalists, if it were carried to any lengths, and would lead through ruin and misery to the violent outbreak of the very revolution which these timid people are so anxious to forego.

The Hopes of Civilization

Then there are others who, looking back on the past, and perceiving that the workmen of the Middle Ages lived in more comfort and self-respect than ours do, even though they were subjected to the class rule of men who were looked on as another order of beings than they, think that if those conditions of life could be reproduced under our better political conditions the question would be solved for a time at

least. Their schemes may be summed up in attempts, more or less preposterously futile, to graft a class of independent peasants on our system of wages and capital. They do not understand that this system of independent workmen, producing almost entirely for the consumption of themselves and their neighbours, and exploited by the upper classes by obvious taxes on their labour, which was not otherwise organized or interfered with by the exploiters, was what in past times took the place of our system, in which the workers sell their labour in the competitive market to masters who have in their hands the whole organization of the markets, and that these two systems are mutually destructive.

Others again believe in the possibility of starting from our present workhouse system, for the raising of the lowest part of the working population into a better condition, but do not trouble themselves as to the position of the workers who are fairly above the condition of pauperism, or consider what part they will play in the contest for a better livelihood. And, lastly, quite a large number of well-intentioned persons belonging to the richer classes believe, that in a society that compels competition for livelihood, and holds out to the workers as a stimulus to exertion the hope of their rising into a monopolist class of non-producers, it is yet possible to "moralize" capital (to use a slang phrase of the Positivists): that is to say, that a sentiment imported from a religion which looks upon another world as the true sphere of action for mankind, will override the necessities of our daily life in this world. This curious hope is founded on the feeling that a sentiment antagonistic to the full development of commercialism exists and is gaining ground, and that this sentiment is an independent growth of the ethics of the present epoch. As a matter of fact, admitting its existence, as I think we must do, it is the birth of the sense of insecurity which is the shadow cast before by the approaching dissolution of modern society founded on wage-slavery.

The greater part of these schemes aim, though seldom with the consciousness of their promoters, at the creation of

a new middle-class out of the wage-earning class, and at their expense, just as the present middle-class was developed out of the serf-population of the early Middle Ages. It may be possible that such a *further* development of the middle-class lies before us, but it will not be brought about by any such artificial means as the above-mentioned schemes. If it comes at all, it must be produced by events, which at present we cannot foresee, acting on our commercial system, and revivifying for a little time, maybe, that Capitalist Society which now seems sickening towards its end.

The Hopes of Civilization

For what is visible before us in these days is the competitive commercial system killing itself by its own force: profits lessening, businesses growing bigger and bigger, the small employer of labour thrust out of his function, and the aggregation of capital increasing the numbers of the lower middle-class from above rather than from below, by driving the smaller manufacturer into the position of a mere servant to the bigger. The productivity of labour also increasing out of all proportion to the capacity of the capitalists to manage the market or deal with the labour supply: lack of employment therefore becoming chronic, and discontent therewithal.

All this on the one hand. On the other, the workman claiming everywhere political equality, which cannot long be denied; and education spreading, so that what between the improvement in the education of the working-class and the continued amazing fatuity of that of the upper classes, there is a distinct tendency to equalization here; and, as I have hinted above, all history shows us what a danger to society may be a class at once educated and socially degraded: though, indeed, no history has yet shown us—what is swiftly advancing upon us—a class which, though it shall have attained knowledge, shall lack utterly the refinement and self-respect which come from the union of knowledge with leisure and ease of life. The growth of such a class may well make the "cultured" people of to-day tremble.

Whatever, therefore, of unforeseen and unconceived-of

may lie in the womb of the future, there is nothing visible before us but a decaying system, with no outlook but ever-increasing entanglement and blindness, and a new system, Socialism, the hope of which is ever growing clearer in men's minds—a system which not only sees how labour can be freed from its present fetters, and organized unwastefully, so as to produce the greatest possible amount of wealth for the community and for every member of it, but which bears with it its own ethics and religion and æsthetics: that is the hope and promise of a new and higher life in all ways. So that even if those unforeseen economical events above spoken of were to happen, and put off for a while the end of our Capitalist system, the latter would drag itself along as an anomaly cursed by all, a mere clog on the aspirations of humanity.

It is not likely that it will come to that: in all probability the logical outcome of the latter days of Capitalism will go step by step with its actual history: while all men, even its declared enemies, will be working to bring Socialism about, the aims of those who have learned to believe in the certainty and beneficence of its advent will become clearer, their methods for realizing it clearer also, and at last ready to hand. Then will come that open acknowledgment for the necessity of the change (an acknowledgment coming from the intelligence of civilization) which is commonly called Revolution. It is no use prophesying as to the events which will accompany that revolution, but to a reasonable man it seems unlikely to the last degree, or we will say impossible, that a moral sentiment will induce the proprietary classes—those who live by *owning* the means of production which the unprivileged classes must needs *use*—to yield up this privilege uncompelled; all one can hope is that they will see the implicit threat of compulsion in the events of the day, and so yield with a good grace to the terrible necessity of forming part of a world in which all, including themselves, will work honestly and live easily.

THE AIMS OF ART

IN considering the Aims of Art, that is, why men toilsomely cherish and practise Art, I find myself compelled to generalize from the only specimen of humanity of which I know anything; to wit, myself. Now, when I think of what it is that I desire, I find that I can give it no other name than happiness. I want to be happy while I live; for as for death, I find that, never having experienced it, I have no conception of what it means, and so cannot even bring my mind to bear upon it. I know what it is to live; I cannot even guess what it is to be dead. Well, then, I want to be happy, and even sometimes, say generally, to be merry; and I find it difficult to believe that that is not the universal desire: so that, whatever tends towards that end I cherish with all my best endeavour. Now, when I consider my life further, I find out, or seem to, that it is under the influence of two dominating moods, which for lack of better words I must call the mood of energy and the mood of idleness: these two moods are now one, now the other, always crying out in me to be satisfied. When the mood of energy is upon me, I must be doing something, or I become mopish and unhappy; when the mood of idleness is on me, I find it hard indeed if I cannot rest and let my mind wander over the various pictures, pleasant or terrible, which my own experience or my communing with the thoughts of other men, dead or alive, have fashioned in it; and if circumstances will not allow me to cultivate this mood of idleness, I find I must at the best pass through a period of pain till I can manage to stimulate my mood of energy to take its place and make me happy again. And if I have no means wherewith to rouse up that mood of energy to do its duty in making me happy, and I have to toil while the idle mood is upon me, then am I unhappy indeed, and almost wish myself dead, though I do not know what that means.

Furthermore, I find that while in the mood of idleness memory amuses me, in the mood of energy hope cheers me;

which hope is sometimes big and serious, and sometimes trivial, but that without it there is no happy energy. Again, I find that while I can sometimes satisfy this mood by merely exercising it in work that has no result beyond the passing hour—in play, in short—yet that it presently wearies of that and gets languid, the hope therein being too trivial, and sometimes even scarcely real; and that on the whole, to satisfy my master the mood, I must either be making something or making believe to make it.

Well, I believe that all men's lives are compounded of these two moods in various proportions, and that this explains why they have always, with more or less of toil, cherished and practised art.

Why should they have touched it else, and so added to the labour which they could not choose but do in order to live? It must have been done for their pleasure, since it has only been in very elaborate civilizations that a man could get other men to keep him alive merely to produce works of art, whereas all men that have left any signs of their existence behind them have practised art.

I suppose, indeed, that nobody will be inclined to deny that the end proposed by a work of art is always to please the person whose senses are to be made conscious of it. It was done *for* some one who was to be made happier by it; his idle or restful mood was to be amused by it, so that the vacancy which is the besetting evil of that mood might give place to pleased contemplation, dreaming, or what you will; and by this means he would not so soon be driven into his workful or energetic mood: he would have more enjoyment, and better.

The restraining of restlessness, therefore, is clearly one of the essential aims of art, and few things could add to the pleasure of life more than this. There are, to my knowledge, gifted people now alive who have no other vice than this of restlessness, and seemingly no other curse in their lives to make them unhappy: but that is enough; it is "the little rift

within the lute." Restlessness makes them hapless men and bad citizens.

But granting, as I suppose you all will do, that this is a most important function for art to fulfil, the question next comes, at what price do we obtain it? I have admitted that the practice of art has added to the labour of mankind, though I believe in the long run it will not do so; but in adding to the labour of man has it added, so far, to his pain? There always have been people who would at once say yes to that question; so that there have been and are two sets of people who dislike and contemn art as an embarrassing folly. Besides the pious ascetics, who look upon it as a worldly entanglement which prevents men from keeping their minds fixed on the chances of their individual happiness or misery in the next world; who, in short, hate art, because they think that it adds to man's earthly happiness—besides these, there are also people who, looking on the struggle of life from the most reasonable point that they know of, contemn the arts because they think that they add to man's slavery by increasing the sum of his painful labour: if this were the case, it would still, to my mind, be a question whether it might not be worth the while to endure the extra pain of labour for the sake of the extra pleasure added to rest; assuming, for the present, equality of condition among men. But it seems to me that it is not the case that the practice of art adds to painful labour; nay more, I believe that, if it did, art would never have arisen at all, would certainly not be discernible, as it is, among peoples in whom only the germs of civilization exist. In other words, I believe that art cannot be the result of external compulsion; the labour which goes to produce it is voluntary, and partly undertaken for the sake of the labour itself, partly for the sake of the hope of producing something which, when done, shall give pleasure to the user of it. Or, again, this extra labour, when it *is* extra, is undertaken with the aim of satisfying that mood of energy by employing it to produce something

worth doing, and which, therefore, will keep before the worker a lively hope while he is working; and also by giving it work to do in which there is absolute immediate pleasure. Perhaps it is difficult to explain to the non-artistic capacity that this definite sensuous pleasure is always present in the handiwork of the deft workman when he is working successfully, and that it increases in proportion to the freedom and individuality of the work. Also you must understand that this production of art, and consequent pleasure in work, is not confined to the production of matters which are works of art only, like pictures, statues, and so forth, but has been and should be a part of all labour in some form or other: so only will the claims of the mood of energy be satisfied.

Therefore the Aim of Art is to increase the happiness of men, by giving them beauty and interest of incident to amuse their leisure, and prevent them wearying even of rest, and by giving them hope and bodily pleasure in their work; or, shortly, to make man's work happy and his rest fruitful. Consequently, genuine art is an unmixed blessing to the race of man.

But as the word "genuine" is a large qualification, I must ask leave to attempt to draw some practical conclusions from this assertion of the Aims of Art, which will, I suppose, or indeed hope, lead us into some controversy on the subject; because it is futile indeed to expect any one to speak about art, except in the most superficial way, without encountering those social problems which all serious men are thinking of; since art is and must be, either in its abundance or its barrenness, in its sincerity or its hollowness, the expression of the society amongst which it exists.

First, then, it is clear to me that, at the present time, those who look widest at things and deepest into them are quite dissatisfied with the present state of the arts, as they are also with the present condition of society. This I say in the teeth of the supposed revivification of art which has taken place of late years: in fact, that very excitement about the arts

amongst a part of the cultivated people of to-day does but show on how firm a basis the dissatisfaction above mentioned rests. Forty years ago there was much less talk about art, much less practice of it, than there is now; and that is specially true of the architectural arts, which I shall mostly have to speak about now. People have consciously striven to raise the dead in art since that time, and with some superficial success. Nevertheless, in spite of this conscious effort, I must tell you that England, to a person who can feel and understand beauty, was a less grievous place to live in then than it is now; and we who feel what art means know well, though we do not often dare to say so, that forty years hence it will be a more grievous place to us than it is now if we still follow up the road we are on. Less than forty years ago—about thirty—I first saw the city of Rouen, then still in its outward aspect a piece of the Middle Ages: no words can tell you how its mingled beauty, history, and romance took hold on me; I can only say that, looking back on my past life, I find it was the greatest pleasure I have ever had: and now it is a pleasure which no one can ever have again: it is lost to the world for ever. At that time I was an undergraduate of Oxford. Though not so astounding, so romantic, or at first sight so mediæval as the Norman city, Oxford in those days still kept a great deal of its earlier loveliness: and the memory of its grey streets as they then were has been an abiding influence and pleasure in my life, and would be greater still if I could only forget what they are now—a matter of far more importance than the so-called learning of the place could have been to me in any case, but which, as it was, no one tried to teach me, and I did not try to learn. Since then the guardians of this beauty and romance so fertile of education, though professedly engaged in "the higher education" (as the futile system of compromises which they follow is nick-named), have ignored it utterly, have made its preservation give way to the pressure of commercial exigencies, and are determined apparently to destroy it altogether.

There is another pleasure for the world gone down the wind; here, again, the beauty and romance have been uselessly, causelessly, most foolishly thrown away.

These two cases are given simply because they have been fixed in my mind; they are but types of what is going on everywhere throughout civilization: the world is everywhere growing uglier and more commonplace, in spite of the conscious and very strenuous efforts of a small group of people towards the revival of art, which are so obviously out of joint with the tendency of the age that, while the uncultivated have not even heard of them, the mass of the cultivated look upon them as a joke, and even that they are now beginning to get tired of.

Now, if it be true, as I have asserted, that genuine art is an unmixed blessing to the world, this is a serious matter; for at first sight it seems to show that there will soon be no art at all in the world, which will thus lose an unmixed blessing; it can ill afford to do that, I think.

For art, if it has to die, has worn itself out, and its aim will be a thing forgotten; and its aim was to make work happy and rest fruitful. Is all work to be unhappy, all rest unfruitful, then? Indeed, if art is to perish, that will be the case, unless something is to take its place—something at present unnamed, undreamed of.

I do not think that anything will take the place of art; not that I doubt the ingenuity of man, which seems to be boundless in the direction of making himself unhappy, but because I believe the springs of art in the human mind to be deathless, and also because it seems to me easy to see the causes of the present obliteration of the arts.

For we civilized people have not given them up consciously, or of our free will; we have been *forced* to give them up. Perhaps I can illustrate that by the detail of the application of machinery to the production of things in which artistic form of some sort is possible. Why does a reasonable man use a machine? Surely to save his labour. There are some things which a machine can do as well as a man's hand,

plus a tool, can do them. He need not, for instance, grind his corn in a hand-quern; a little trickle of water, a wheel, and a few simple contrivances will do it all perfectly well, and leave him free to smoke his pipe and think, or to carve the handle of his knife. That, so far, is unmixed gain in the use of a machine—always, mind you, supposing equality of condition among men; no art is lost, leisure or time for more pleasurable work is gained. Perhaps a perfectly reasonable and free man would stop there in his dealings with machinery; but such reason and freedom are too much to expect, so let us follow our machine-inventor a step farther. He has to weave plain cloth, and finds doing so dullish on the one hand, and on the other that a power-loom will weave the cloth nearly as well as a hand-loom: so, in order to gain more leisure or time for more pleasurable work, he uses a power-loom, and foregoes the small advantage of the little extra art in the cloth. But so doing, as far as the art is concerned, he has not got a pure gain; he has made a bargain between art and labour, and got a makeshift as a consequence. I do not say that he may not be right in so doing, but that he has lost as well as gained. Now, this is as far as a man who values art and is reasonable would go in the matter of machinery *as long as he was free*—that is, was not *forced* to work for another man's profit; so long as he was living in a society *that had accepted equality of condition*. Carry the machine used for art a step farther, and he becomes an unreasonable man, if he values art and is free. To avoid misunderstanding, I must say that I am thinking of the modern machine, which is as it were alive, and to which the man is auxiliary, and not of the old machine, the improved tool, which is auxiliary to the man, and only works as long as his hand is thinking; though I will remark, that even this elementary form of machine has to be dropped when we come to the higher and more intricate forms of art. Well, as to the machine proper used for art, when it gets to the stage above dealing with a necessary production that has accidentally some beauty about it, a reasonable man with a

feeling for art will only use it when he is *forced* to. If he thinks he would like ornament, for instance, and knows that the machine cannot do it properly, and does not care to spend the time to do it properly, why should he do it at all? He will not diminish his leisure for the sake of making something he does not want unless some man or band of men force him to it; so he will either go without the ornament, or sacrifice some of his leisure to have it genuine. That will be a sign that he wants it very much, and that it will be worth his trouble: in which case, again, his labour on it will not be mere trouble, but will interest and please him by satisfying the needs of his mood of energy.

This, I say, is how a reasonable man would act if he were free from man's compulsion; not being free, he acts very differently. He has long passed the stage at which machines are only used for doing work repulsive to an average man, or for doing what could be as well done by a machine as a man, and he instinctively expects a machine to be invented whenever any product of industry becomes sought after. He is the slave to machinery; the new machine *must* be invented, and when invented he *must*—I will not say use it, but be used by it, whether he likes it or not.

But why is he the slave to machinery? Because he is the slave to the system for whose existence the invention of machinery was necessary.

And now I must drop, or rather have dropped, the assumption of the equality of condition, and remind you that, though in a sense we are all the slaves of machinery, yet that some men are so directly without any metaphor at all, and that these are just those on whom the great body of the arts depends—the workmen. It is necessary for the system which keeps them in their position as an inferior class that they should either be themselves machines or be the servants to machines, in no case having any interest in the work which they turn out. To their employers they are, so far as they are workmen, a part of the machinery of the workshop or the factory; to themselves they are proleta-

rians, human beings working to live that they may live to work: their part of craftsmen, of makers of things by their own free will, is played out.

At the risk of being accused of sentimentality, I will say that since this is so, since the work which produces the things that should be matters of art is but a burden and a slavery, I exult in this at least, that it cannot produce art; that all it can do lies between stark utilitarianism and idiotic sham.

Or indeed is that merely sentimental? Rather, I think, we who have learned to see the connection between industrial slavery and the degradation of the arts have learned also to hope for a future for those arts; since the day will certainly come when men will shake off the yoke, and refuse to accept the mere artificial compulsion of the gambling-market to waste their lives in ceaseless and hopeless toil; and when it does come, their instincts for beauty and imagination set free along with them, will produce such art as they need; and who can say that it will not as far surpass the art of past ages as that does the poor relics of it left us by the age of commerce?

A word or two on an objection which has often been made to me when I have been talking on this subject. It may be said, and is often, You regret the art of the Middle Ages (as indeed I do), but those who produced it were not free; they were serfs, or gild-craftsmen surrounded by brazen walls of trade restrictions; they had no political rights, and were exploited by their masters, the noble caste, most grievously. Well, I quite admit that the oppression and violence of the Middle Ages had its effect on the art of those days, its shortcomings are traceable to them; they repressed art in certain directions, I do not doubt that; and for that reason I say, that when we shake off the present oppression as we shook off the old, we may expect the art of the days of real freedom to rise above that of those old violent days. But I do say that it was possible then to have social, organic, hopeful progressive art; whereas now such poor scraps of it as are left are the result of individual and wasteful struggle, are retrospective

and pessimistic. And this hopeful art was possible amidst all the oppression of those days, because the instruments of that oppression were grossly obvious, and were external to the work of the craftsman. They were laws and customs obviously intended to rob him, and open violence of the highway-robbery kind. In short, industrial production was not the instrument used for robbing the "lower classes"; it is now the main instrument used in that honourable profession. The mediæval craftsman was free in his work, therefore he made it as amusing to himself as he could; and it was his pleasure and not his pain that made all things beautiful that were made, and lavished treasures of human hope and thought on everything that man made, from a cathedral to a porridge-pot. Come, let us put it in the way least respectful to the mediæval craftsman, most polite to the modern "hand": the poor devil of the fourteenth century, his work was of so little value that he was allowed to waste it by the hour in pleasing himself—and others; but our highly-strung mechanic, his minutes are too rich with the burden of perpetual profit for him to be allowed to waste one of them on art; the present system will not allow him—cannot allow him—to produce works of art.

So that there has arisen this strange phenomenon, that there is now a class of ladies and gentlemen, very refined indeed, though not perhaps as well informed as is generally supposed, and of this refined class there are many who do really love beauty and incident—*i.e.*, art, and would make sacrifices to get it; and these are led by artists of great manual skill and high intellect, forming altogether a large body of demand for the article. And yet the supply does not come. Yes, and moreover, this great body of enthusiastic demanders are no mere poor and helpless people, ignorant fisher-peasants, half-mad monks, scatter-brained sans-culottes—none of those, in short, the expression of whose needs has shaken the world so often before, and will do yet again. No, they are of the ruling classes, the masters of men,

who can live without labour, and have abundant leisure to scheme out the fulfilment of their desires; and yet I say they cannot have the art which they so much long for, though they hunt it about the world so hard, sentimentalizing the sordid lives of the miserable peasants of Italy and the starving proletarians of her towns, now that all the picturesqueness has departed from the poor devils of our own countryside, and of our own slums. Indeed, there is little of reality left them anywhere, and that little is fast fading away before the needs of the manufacturer and his ragged regiment of workers, and before the enthusiasm of the archæological restorer of the dead past. Soon there will be nothing left except the lying dreams of history, the miserable wreckage of our museums and picture-galleries, and the carefully guarded interiors of our æsthetic drawing-rooms, unreal and foolish, fitting witnesses of the life of corruption that goes on there, so pinched and meagre and cowardly, with its concealment and ignoring, rather than restraint of, natural longings; which does not forbid the greedy indulgence in them if it can but be decently hidden.

The art then is gone, and can no more be "restored" on its old lines than a mediæval building can be. The rich and refined cannot have it though they would, and though we will believe many of them would. And why? Because those who could give it to the rich are not allowed by the rich to do so. In one word, slavery lies between us and art.

I have said as much as that the aim of art was to destroy the curse of labour by making work the pleasurable satisfaction of our impulse towards energy, and giving to that energy hope of producing something worth its exercise.

Now, therefore, I say, that since we cannot have art by striving after its mere superficial manifestation, since we can have nothing but its sham by so doing, there yet remains for us to see how it would be if we let the shadow take care of itself and try, if we can, to lay hold of the substance. For my part I believe, that if we try to realize the aims of art without much troubling ourselves what the aspect of the art itself

shall be, we shall find we shall have what we want at last: whether it is to be called art or not, it will at least be *life;* and, after all, that is what we want. It may lead us into new splendours and beauties of visible art; to architecture with manifolded magnificence free from the curious incompleteness and failings of that which the older times have produced —to painting, uniting to the beauty which mediæval art attained the realism which modern art aims at; to sculpture, uniting the beauty of the Greek and the expression of the Renaissance with some third quality yet undiscovered, so as to give us the images of men and women splendidly alive, yet not disqualified from making, as all true sculpture should, architectural ornament. All this it may do; or, on the other hand, it may lead us into the desert, and art may seem to be dead amidst us; or feebly and uncertainly to be struggling in a world which has utterly forgotten its old glories.

For my part, with art as it now is, I cannot bring myself to think that it much matters which of these dooms awaits it, so long as each bears with it some hope of what is to come; since here, as in other matters, there is no hope save in Revolution. The old art is no longer fertile, no longer yields us anything save elegantly poetical regrets; being barren, it has but to die, and the matter of moment now is, as to how it shall die, whether *with* hope or *without* it.

What is it, for instance, that has destroyed the Rouen, the Oxford of *my* elegant poetic regret? Has it perished for the benefit of the people, either slowly yielding to the growth of intelligent change and new happiness, or has it been, as it were, thunderstricken by the tragedy which mostly accompanies some great new birth? Not so. Neither phalangstere nor dynamite has swept its beauty away, its destroyers have not been either the philanthropist or the Socialist, the co-operator or the anarchist. It has been sold, and at a cheap price indeed: muddled away by the greed and incompetence of fools who do not know what life and pleasure mean, who will neither take them themselves nor let others have them. That is why the death of that beauty wounds us so: no man

of sense or feeling would dare to regret such losses if they had been paid for by new life and happiness for the people. But there is the people still as it was before, still facing for its part the monster who destroyed all that beauty, and whose name is Commercial Profit.

I repeat, that every scrap of genuine art will fall by the same hands if the matter only goes on long enough, although a sham art may be left in its place, which may very well be carried on by *dilettanti* fine gentlemen and ladies without any help from below; and, to speak plainly, I fear that this gibbering ghost of the real thing would satisfy a great many of those who now think themselves lovers of art; though it is not difficult to see a long vista of its degradation till it shall become at last a mere laughing-stock; that is to say, if the thing were to go on: I mean, if art were to be for ever the amusement of those whom we now call ladies and gentlemen.

But for my part I do not think it will go on long enough to reach such depths as that; and yet I should be hypocritical if I were to say that I thought that the change in the basis of society, which would enfranchise labour and make men practically equal in condition, would lead us by a short road to the splendid new birth of art which I have mentioned, though I feel quite certain that it would not leave what we now call art untouched, since the aims of that revolution do include the aims of art—*viz.*, abolishing the curse of labour.

I suppose that this is what is likely to happen: that machinery will go on developing, with the purpose of saving men labour, till the mass of the people attain real leisure enough to be able to appreciate the pleasure of life; till, in fact, they have attained such mastery over Nature that they no longer fear starvation as a penalty for not working more than enough. When they get to that point they will doubtless turn themselves and begin to find out what it is that they really want to do. They would soon find out that the less work they did (the less work unaccompanied by art, I mean), the more desirable a dwelling-place the earth would be; they would accordingly do less and less work, till the mood of

energy, of which I began by speaking, urged them on afresh: but by that time Nature, relieved by the relaxation of man's work, would be recovering her ancient beauty and be teaching men the old story of art. And as the Artificial Famine, caused by men working for the profit of a master, and which we now look upon as a matter of course, would have long disappeared, they would be free to do as they chose, and they would set aside their machines in all cases where the work seemed pleasant or desirable for handiwork; till in all crafts where production of beauty was required, the most direct communication between a man's hand and his brain would be sought for. And there would be many occupations also, as the processes of agriculture, in which the voluntary exercise of energy would be thought so delightful, that people would not dream of handing over its pleasure to the jaws of a machine.

In short, men will find out that the men of our days were wrong in first multiplying their needs, and then trying, each man of them, to evade all participation in the means and processes whereby those needs are satisfied; that this kind of division of labour is really only a new and wilful form of arrogant and slothful ignorance, far more injurious to the happiness and contentment of life than the ignorance of the processes of Nature, of what we sometimes call *science*, which men of the earlier days unwittingly lived in.

They will discover, or rediscover rather, that the true secret of happiness *lies in the taking a genuine interest in all the details of daily life*, in elevating them by art instead of handing the performance of them over to unregarded drudges, and ignoring them; and that in cases where it was impossible either so to elevate them and make them interesting, or to lighten them by the use of machinery, so as to make the labour of them trifling, that should be taken as a token that the supposed advantages gained by them were not worth the trouble and had better be given up. All this to my mind would be the outcome of men throwing off the burden of Artificial Famine, supposing, as I cannot help supposing,

that the impulses which have from the first glimmerings of history urged men on to the practice of Art were still at work in them.

Thus and thus only *can* come about the new birth of Art, and I think it *will* come about thus. You may say it is a long process, and so it is; but I can conceive of a longer. I have given you the Socialist or Optimist view of the matter. Now for the Pessimist view.

I can conceive that the revolt against Artificial Famine or Capitalism, which is now on foot, may be vanquished. The result will be that the working class—the slaves of society—will become more and more degraded; that they will not strive against overwhelming force, but, stimulated by that love of life which Nature, always anxious about the perpetuation of the race, has implanted in us, will learn to bear everything—starvation, overwork, dirt, ignorance, brutality. All these things they will bear, as, alas! they bear them too well even now; all this rather than risk sweet life and bitter livelihood, and all sparks of hope and manliness will die out of them.

Nor will their masters be much better off: the earth's surface will be hideous everywhere, save in the uninhabitable desert; Art will utterly perish, as in the manual arts so in literature, which will become, as it is indeed speedily becoming, a mere string of orderly and calculated ineptitudes and passionless ingenuities; Science will grow more and more one-sided, more incomplete, more wordy and useless, till at last she will pile herself up into such a mass of superstition, that beside it the theologies of old time will seem mere reason and enlightenment. All will get lower and lower, till the heroic struggles of the past to realize hope from year to year, from century to century, will be utterly forgotten, and man will be an indescribable being—hopeless, desireless, lifeless.

And will there be deliverance from this even? Maybe: man may, after some terrible cataclysm, learn to strive towards a healthy animalism, may grow from a tolerable animal into a savage, from a savage into a barbarian, and so

on; and some thousands of years hence he may be beginning once more those arts which we have now lost, and be carving interlacements like the New Zealanders, or scratching forms of animals on their cleaned blade-bones, like the pre-historic men of the drift.

But in any case, according to the pessimist view, which looks upon revolt against Artificial Famine as impossible to succeed, we shall wearily trudge the circle again, until some accident, some unforeseen consequence of arrangement, makes an end of us altogether.

That pessimism I do not believe in, nor, on the other hand, do I suppose that it is altogether a matter of our wills as to whether we shall further human progress or human degradation; yet, since there are those who are impelled towards the Socialist or Optimistic side of things, I must conclude that there is some hope of its prevailing, that the strenuous efforts of many individuals imply a force which is thrusting them on. So that I believe that the "Aims of Art" will be realized, though I know that they cannot be so long as we groan under the tyranny of Artificial Famine. Once again I warn you against supposing, you who may specially love art, that you will do any good by attempting to revivify art by dealing with its dead exterior. I say it is the *aims of art* that you must seek rather than the *art itself;* and in that search we may find ourselves in a world blank and bare, as the result of our caring at least this much for art, that we will not endure the shams of it.

Anyhow, I ask you to think with me that the worst which can happen to us is to endure tamely the evils that we see; that no trouble or turmoil is so bad as that; that the necessary destruction which reconstruction bears with it must be taken calmly; that everywhere—in State, in Church, in the household—we must be resolute to endure no tyranny, accept no lie, quail before no fear, although they may come before us disguised as piety, duty, or affection, as useful opportunity and good-nature, as prudence or kindness. The world's roughness, falseness, and injustice will bring about

their natural consequences, and we and our lives are part of those consequences; but since we inherit also the consequences of old resistance to those curses, let us each look to it to have our fair share of that inheritance also, which, if nothing else come of it, will at least bring to us courage and hope; that is, eager life while we live, which is above all things the Aim of Art.

USEFUL WORK *versus* USELESS TOIL

THE above title may strike some of my readers as strange. It is assumed by most people nowadays that all work is useful, and by most *well-to-do* people that all work is desirable. Most people, well-to-do or not, believe that, even when a man is doing work which appears to be useless, he is earning his livelihood by it—he is "employed," as the phrase goes; and most of those who are well-to-do cheer on the happy worker with congratulations and praises, if he is only "industrious" enough and deprives himself of all pleasure and holidays in the sacred cause of labour. In short, it has become an article of the creed of modern morality that all labour is good in itself—a convenient belief to those who live on the labour of others. But as to those on whom they live, I recommend them not to take it on trust, but to look into the matter a little deeper.

Let us grant, first, that the race of man must either labour or perish. Nature does not give us our livelihood gratis; we must win it by toil of some sort or degree. Let us see, then, if she does not give us some compensation for this compulsion to labour, since certainly in other matters she takes care to make the acts necessary to the continuance of life in the individual and the race not only endurable, but even pleasurable.

You may be sure that she does so, that it is of the nature of man, when he is not diseased, to take pleasure in his work under certain conditions. And, yet, we must say in the teeth of the hypocritical praise of all labour, whatsoever it may be, of which I have made mention, that there is some labour which is so far from being a blessing that it is a curse; that it would be better for the community and for the worker if the latter were to fold his hands and refuse to work, and either die or let us pack him off to the workhouse or prison—which you will.

Here, you see, are two kinds of work—one good, the

other bad; one not far removed from a blessing, a lightening of life; the other a mere curse, a burden to life. Useful Work *v.* Useless Toil

What is the difference between them, then? This: one has hope in it, the other has not. It is manly to do the one kind of work, and manly also to refuse to do the other.

What is the nature of the hope which, when it is present in work, makes it worth doing?

It is threefold, I think—hope of rest, hope of product, hope of pleasure in the work itself; and hope of these also in some abundance and of good quality; rest enough and good enough to be worth having; product worth having by one who is neither a fool nor an ascetic; pleasure enough for all for us to be conscious of it while we are at work; not a mere habit, the loss of which we shall feel as a fidgety man feels the loss of the bit of string he fidgets with.

I have put the hope of rest first because it is the simplest and most natural part of our hope. Whatever pleasure there is in some work, there is certainly some pain in all work, the beast-like pain of stirring up our slumbering energies to action, the beast-like dread of change when things are pretty well with us; and the compensation for this animal pain is animal rest. We must feel while we are working that the time will come when we shall not have to work. Also the rest, when it comes, must be long enough to allow us to enjoy it; it must be longer than is merely necessary for us to recover the strength we have expended in working, and it must be animal rest also in this, that it must not be disturbed by anxiety, else we shall not be able to enjoy it. If we have this amount and kind of rest we shall, so far, be no worse off than the beasts.

As to the hope of product, I have said that Nature compels us to work for that. It remains for *us* to look to it that we *do* really produce something, and not nothing, or at least nothing that we want or are allowed to use. If we look to this and use our wills we shall, so far, be better than machines.

The hope of pleasure in the work itself: how strange that

hope must seem to some of my readers—to most of them! Yet I think that to all living things there is a pleasure in the exercise of their energies, and that even beasts rejoice in being lithe and swift and strong. But a man at work, making something which he feels will exist because he is working at it and wills it, is exercising the energies of his mind and soul as well as of his body. Memory and imagination help him as he works. Not only his own thoughts, but the thoughts of the men of past ages guide his hands; and, as a part of the human race, he creates. If we work thus we shall be men, and our days will be happy and eventful.

Thus worthy work carries with it the hope of pleasure in rest, the hope of the pleasure in our using what it makes, and the hope of pleasure in our daily creative skill.

All other work but this is worthless; it is slaves' work—mere toiling to live, that we may live to toil.

Therefore, since we have, as it were, a pair of scales in which to weigh the work now done in the world, let us use them. Let us estimate the worthiness of the work we do, after so many thousand years of toil, so many promises of hope deferred, such boundless exultation over the progress of civilization and the gain of liberty.

Now, the first thing as to the work done in civilization and the easiest to notice is that it is portioned out very unequally amongst the different classes of society. First, there are people—not a few—who do no work, and make no pretence of doing any. Next, there are people, and very many of them, who work fairly hard, though with abundant easements and holidays, claimed and allowed; and lastly, there are people who work so hard that they may be said to do nothing else than work, and are accordingly called "the working classes," as distinguished from the middle classes and the rich, or aristocracy, whom I have mentioned above.

It is clear that this inequality presses heavily upon the "working" class, and must visibly tend to destroy their hope of rest at least, and so, in that particular, make them worse off than mere beasts of the field; but that is not the

sum and end of our folly of turning useful work into useless toil, but only the beginning of it. Useful Work *v.* Useless Toil

For first, as to the class of rich people doing no work, we all know that they consume a great deal while they produce nothing. Therefore, clearly, they have to be kept at the expense of those who do work, just as paupers have, and are a mere burden on the community. In these days there are many who have learned to see this, though they can see no further into the evils of our present system, and have formed no idea of any scheme for getting rid of this burden; though perhaps they have a vague hope that changes in the system of voting for members of the House of Commons may, as if by magic, tend in that direction. With such hopes or superstitions we need not trouble ourselves. Moreover, this class, the aristocracy, once thought most necessary to the State, is scant of numbers, and has now no power of its own, but depends on the support of the class next below it—the middle class. In fact, it is really composed either of the most successful men of that class, or of their immediate descendants.

As to the middle class, including the trading, manufacturing, and professional people of our society, they do, as a rule, seem to work quite hard enough, and so at first sight might be thought to help the community, and not burden it. But by far the greater part of them, though they work, do not produce, and even when they do produce, as in the case of those engaged (wastefully indeed) in the distribution of goods, or doctors, or (genuine) artists and literary men, they consume out of all proportion to their due share. The commercial and manufacturing part of them, the most powerful part, spend their lives and energies in fighting amongst themselves for their respective shares of the wealth which they *force* the genuine workers to provide for them; the others are almost wholly the hangers-on of these; they do not work for the public, but a privileged class: they are the parasites of property, sometimes, as in the case of lawyers, undisguisedly so; sometimes, as the doctors

and others above mentioned, professing to be useful, but too often of no use save as supporters of the system of folly, fraud, and tyranny of which they form a part. And all these we must remember have, as a rule, one aim in view; not the production of utilities, but the gaining of a position either for themselves or their children in which they will not have to work at all. It is their ambition and the end of their whole lives to gain, if not for themselves yet at least for their children, the proud position of being obvious burdens on the community. For their work itself, in spite of the sham dignity with which they surround it, they care nothing: save a few enthusiasts, men of science, art, or letters, who, if they are not the salt of the earth, are at least (and oh, the pity of it!) the salt of the miserable system of which they are the slaves, which hinders and thwarts them at every turn, and even sometimes corrupts them.

Here then is another class, this time very numerous and all-powerful, which produces very little and consumes enormously, and is therefore in the main supported, as paupers are, by the real producers. The class that remains to be considered produces all that is produced, and supports both itself and the other classes, though it is placed in a position of inferiority to them; real inferiority, mind you, involving a degradation both of mind and body. But it is a necessary consequence of this tyranny and folly that again many of these workers are not producers. A vast number of them once more are merely parasites of property, some of them openly so, as the soldiers by land and sea who are kept on foot for the perpetuating of national rivalries and enmities, and for the purposes of the national struggle for the share of the product of unpaid labour. But besides this obvious burden on the producers and the scarcely less obvious one of domestic servants, there is first the army of clerks, shop-assistants, and so forth, who are engaged in the service of the private war for wealth, which, as above said, is the real occupation of the well-to-do middle class. This is a larger body of workers than might be supposed, for it includes amongst

others all those engaged in what I should call competitive salesmanship, or, to use a less dignified word, the puffery of wares, which has now got to such a pitch that there are many things which cost far more to sell than they do to make. Useful Work *v.* Useless Toil

Next there is the mass of people employed in making all those articles of folly and luxury, the demand for which is the outcome of the existence of the rich non-producing classes; things which people leading a manly and uncorrupted life would not ask for or dream of. These things, whoever may gainsay me, I will for ever refuse to call wealth: they are not wealth, but waste. Wealth is what Nature gives us and what a reasonable man can make out of the gifts of Nature for his reasonable use. The sunlight, the fresh air, the unspoiled face of the earth, food, raiment and housing necessary and decent; the storing up of knowledge of all kinds, and the power of disseminating it; means of free communication between man and man; works of art, the beauty which man creates when he is most a man, most aspiring and thoughtful—all things which serve the pleasure of people, free, manly, and uncorrupted. This is wealth. Nor can I think of anything worth having which does not come under one or other of these heads. But think, I beseech you, of the product of England, the workshop of the world, and will you not be bewildered, as I am, at the thought of the mass of things which no sane man could desire, but which our useless toil makes—and sells?

Now, further, there is even a sadder industry yet, which is forced on many, very many, of our workers—the making of wares which are necessary to them and their brethren, *because they are an inferior class*. For if many men live without producing, nay, must live lives so empty and foolish that they *force* a great part of the workers to produce wares which no one needs, not even the rich, it follows that most men must be poor; and, living as they do on wages from those whom they support, cannot get for their use the *goods* which men naturally desire, but must put up with miserable makeshifts for them, with coarse food that does not nourish,

with rotten raiment which does not shelter, with wretched houses which may well make a town-dweller in civilization look back with regret to the tent of the nomad tribe, or the cave of the prehistoric savage. Nay, the workers must even lend a hand to the great industrial invention of the age—adulteration, and by its help produce for their own use shams and mockeries of the luxury of the rich; for the wage-earners must always live as the wage-payers bid them, and their very habits of life are *forced* on them by their masters.

But it is waste of time to try to express in words due contempt of the productions of the much-praised cheapness of our epoch. It must be enough to say that this cheapness is necessary to the system of exploiting on which modern manufacture rests. In other words, our society includes a great mass of slaves, who must be fed, clothed, housed and amused as slaves, and that their daily necessity compels them to make the slave-wares whose use is the perpetuation of their slavery.

To sum up, then, concerning the manner of work in civilized States, these States are composed of three classes—a class which does not even pretend to work, a class which pretends to works but which produces nothing, and a class which works, but is compelled by the other two classes to do work which is often unproductive.

Civilization therefore wastes its own resources, and will do so as long as the present system lasts. These are cold words with which to describe the tyranny under which we suffer; try then to consider what they mean.

There is a certain amount of natural material and of natural forces in the world, and a certain amount of labour-power inherent in the persons of the men that inhabit it. Men urged by their necessities and desires have laboured for many thousands of years at the task of subjugating the forces of Nature and of making the natural material useful to them. To our eyes, since we cannot see into the future, that struggle with Nature seems nearly over, and the victory of the human race over her nearly complete. And, looking

backwards to the time when history first began, we note that the progress of that victory has been far swifter and more startling within the last two hundred years than ever before. Surely, therefore, we moderns ought to be in all ways vastly better off than any who have gone before us. Surely we ought, one and all of us, to be wealthy, to be well furnished with the good things which our victory over Nature has won for us.

Useful Work *v.* Useless Toil

But what is the real fact? Who will dare to deny that the great mass of civilized men are poor? So poor are they that it is mere childishness troubling ourselves to discuss whether perhaps they are in some ways a little better off than their forefathers. They are poor; nor can their poverty be measured by the poverty of a resourceless savage, for he knows of nothing else than his poverty; that he should be cold, hungry, houseless, dirty, ignorant, all that is to him as natural as that he should have a skin. But for us, for the most of us, civilization has bred desires which she forbids us to satisfy, and so is not merely a niggard but a torturer also.

Thus then have the fruits of our victory over Nature been stolen from us, thus has compulsion by Nature to labour in hope of rest, gain, and pleasure been turned into compulsion by man to labour in hope—of living to labour!

What shall we do then, can we mend it?

Well, remember once more that it is not our remote ancestors who achieved the victory over Nature, but our fathers, nay, our very selves. For us to sit hopeless and helpless then would be a strange folly indeed: be sure that we can amend it. What, then, is the first thing to be done?

We have seen that modern society is divided into two classes, one of which is *privileged* to be kept by the labour of the other—that is, it forces the other to work for it and takes from this inferior class everything that it *can* take from it, and uses the wealth so taken to keep its own members in a superior position, to make them beings of a higher order than the others: longer lived, more beautiful, more honoured, more refined than those of the other class. I do not say

that it troubles itself about its members being *positively* long lived, beautiful or refined, but merely insists that they shall be so *relatively* to the inferior class. As also it cannot use the labour-power of the inferior class fairly in producing real wealth, it wastes it wholesale in the production of rubbish.

It is this robbery and waste on the part of the minority which keeps the majority poor; if it could be shown that it is necessary for the preservation of society that this should be submitted to, little more could be said on the matter, save that the despair of the oppressed majority would probably at some time or other destroy Society. But it has been shown, on the contrary, even by such incomplete experiments, for instance, as Co-operation (so-called), that the existence of a privileged class is by no means necessary for the production of wealth, but rather for the "government" of the producers of wealth, or, in other words, for the upholding of privilege.

The first step to be taken then is to abolish a class of men privileged to shirk their duties as men, thus forcing others to do the work which they refuse to do. All must work according to their ability, and so produce what they consume —that is, each man should work as well as he can for his own livelihood, and his livelihood should be assured to him; that is to say, all the advantages which society would provide for each and all of its members.

Thus, at last, would true Society be founded. It would rest on equality of condition. No man would be tormented for the benefit of another—nay, no one man would be tormented for the benefit of Society. Nor, indeed, can that order be called Society which is not upheld for the benefit of every one of its members.

But since men live now, badly as they live, when so many people do not produce at all, and when so much work is wasted, it is clear that, under conditions where all produced and no work was wasted, not only would every one work with the certain hope of gaining a due share of wealth by

his work, but also he could not miss his due share of rest. Here, then, are two out of the three kinds of hope mentioned above as an essential part of worthy work assured to the worker. When class-robbery is abolished, every man will reap the fruits of his labour, every man will have due rest—leisure, that is. Some Socialists might say we need not go any further than this; it is enough that the worker should get the full produce of his work, and that his rest should be abundant. But though the compulsion of man's tyranny is thus abolished, I yet demand compensation for the compulsion of Nature's necessity. As long as the work is repulsive it will still be a burden which must be taken up daily, and even so would mar our life, even though the hours of labour were short. What we want to do is to add to our wealth without diminishing our pleasure. Nature will not be finally conquered till our work becomes a part of the pleasure of our lives.

Useful Work *v.* Useless Toil

That first step of freeing people from the compulsion to labour needlessly will at least put us on the way towards this happy end; for we shall then have time and opportunities for bringing it about. As things are now, between the waste of labour-power in mere idleness and its waste in unproductive work, it is clear that the world of civilization is supported by a small part of its people; when *all* were working *usefully* for its support, the share of work which each would have to do would be but small, if our standard of life were about on the footing of what well-to-do and refined people now think desirable. We shall have labour-power to spare, and shall, in short, be as wealthy as we please. It will be easy to live. If we were to wake up some morning now, under our present system, and find it "easy to live," that system would force us to set to work at once and make it hard to live; we should call that "developing our resources," or some such fine name. The multiplication of labour has become a necessity for us, and as long as that goes on no ingenuity in the invention of machines will be of any real use to us. Each new machine will cause a certain

amount of misery among the workers whose special industry it may disturb; so many of them will be reduced from skilled to unskilled workmen, and then gradually matters will slip into their due grooves, and all will work apparently smoothly again; and if it were not that all this is preparing revolution, things would be, for the greater part of men, just as they were before the new wonderful invention.

But when revolution has made it "easy to live," when all are working harmoniously together and there is no one to rob the worker of his time, that is to say, his life; in those coming days there will be no compulsion on us to go on producing things we do not want, no compulsion on us to labour for nothing; we shall be able calmly and thoughtfully to consider what we shall do with our wealth of labour-power. Now, for my part, I think the first use we ought to make of that wealth, of that freedom, should be to make all our labour, even the commonest and most necessary, pleasant to everybody; for thinking over the matter carefully I can see that the one course which will certainly make life happy in the face of all accidents and troubles is to take a pleasurable interest in all the details of life. And lest perchance you think that an assertion too universally accepted to be worth making, let me remind you how entirely modern civilization forbids it; with what sordid, and even terrible, details it surrounds the life of the poor, what a mechanical and empty life she forces on the rich; and how rare a holiday it is for any of us to feel ourselves a part of Nature, and unhurriedly, thoughtfully, and happily to note the course of our lives amidst all the little links of events which connect them with the lives of others, and build up the great whole of humanity.

But such a holiday our whole lives might be, if we were resolute to make all our labour reasonable and pleasant. But we must be resolute indeed; for no half measures will help us here. It has been said already that our present joyless labour, and our lives scared and anxious as the life of a hunted beast, are forced upon us by the present system of producing

for the profit of the privileged classes. It is necessary to state what this means. Under the present system of wages and capital the "manufacturer" (most absurdly so called, since a manufacturer means a person who makes with his hands) having a monopoly of the means whereby the power to labour inherent in every man's body can be used for production, is the master of those who are not so privileged; he, and he alone, is able to make use of this labour-power, which, on the other hand, is the only commodity by means of which his "capital," that is to say, the accumulated product of past labour, can be made productive to him. He therefore buys the labour-power of those who are bare of capital and can only live by selling it to him; his purpose in this transaction is to increase his capital, to make it breed. It is clear that if he paid those with whom he makes his bargain the full value of their labour, that is to say, all that they produced, he would fail in his purpose. But since he is the monopolist of the means of productive labour, he can *compel* them to make a bargain better for him and worse for them than that; which bargain is that after they have earned their livelihood, estimated according to a standard high enough to ensure their peaceable submission to his mastership, the rest (and by far the larger part as a matter of fact) of what they produce shall belong to him, shall be his *property* to do as he likes with, to use or abuse at his pleasure; which property is, as we all know, jealously guarded by army and navy, police and prison; in short, by that huge mass of physical force which superstition, habit, fear of death by starvation—IGNORANCE, in one word, among the propertyless masses, enables the propertied classes to use for the subjection of—their slaves.

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Now, at other times, other evils resulting from this system may be put forward. What I want to point out now is the impossibility of our attaining to attractive labour under this system, and to repeat that it is this robbery (there is no other word for it) which wastes the available labour-power of the civilized world, forcing many men to do nothing, and many, very many more to do nothing useful; and forcing those

who carry on really useful labour to most burdensome overwork. For understand once for all that the "manufacturer" aims primarily at producing, by means of the labour he has stolen from others, not goods but profits, that is, the "wealth" that is produced over and above the livelihood of his workmen, and the wear and tear of his machinery. Whether that "wealth" is real or sham matters nothing to him. If it sells and yields him a "profit" it is all right. I have said that, owing to there being rich people who have more money than they can spend reasonably, and who therefore buy sham wealth, there is waste on that side; and also that, owing to there being poor people who cannot afford to buy things which are worth making, there is waste on that side. So that the "demand" which the capitalist "supplies" is a false demand. The market in which he sells is "rigged" by the miserable inequalities produced by the robbery of the system of Capital and Wages.

It is this system, therefore, which we must be resolute in getting rid of, if we are to attain to happy and useful work for all. The first step towards making labour attractive is to get the means of making labour fruitful, the Capital, including the land, machinery, factories, &c., into the hands of the community, to be used for the good of all alike, so that we might all work at "supplying" the real "demands" of each and all—that is to say, work for livelihood, instead of working to supply the demand of the profit market—instead of working for profit—*i.e.*, the power of compelling other men to work against their will.

When this first step has been taken and men begin to understand that Nature wills all men either to work or starve, and when they are no longer such fools as to allow some the alternative of stealing, when this happy day is come, we shall then be relieved from the tax of waste, and consequently shall find that we have, as aforesaid, a mass of labour-power available, which will enable us to live as we please within reasonable limits. We shall no longer be hurried and driven by the fear of starvation, which at present presses no less on

the greater part of men in civilized communities than it does on mere savages. The first and most obvious necessities will be so easily provided for in a community in which there is no waste of labour, that we shall have time to look round and consider what we really do want, that can be obtained without over-taxing our energies; for the often-expressed fear of mere idleness falling upon us when the force supplied by the present hierarchy of compulsion is withdrawn, is a fear which is but generated by the burden of excessive and repulsive labour, which we most of us have to bear at present. Useful Work *v.* Useless Toil

I say once more that, in my belief, the first thing which we shall think so necessary as to be worth sacrificing some idle time for, will be the attractiveness of labour. No very heavy sacrifice will be required for attaining this object, but some *will* be required. For we may hope that men who have just waded through a period of strife and revolution will be the last to put up long with a life of mere utilitarianism, though Socialists are sometimes accused by ignorant persons of aiming at such a life. On the other hand, the ornamental part of modern life is already rotten to the core, and must be utterly swept away before the new order of things is realized. There is nothing of it—there is nothing which could come of it that could satisfy the aspirations of men set free from the tyranny of commercialism.

We must begin to build up the ornamental part of life—its pleasures, bodily and mental, scientific and artistic, social and individual—on the basis of work undertaken willingly and cheerfully, with the consciousness of benefiting ourselves and our neighbours by it. Such absolutely necessary work as we should have to do would in the first place take up but a small part of each day, and so far would not be burdensome; but it would be a task of daily recurrence, and therefore would spoil our day's pleasure unless it were made at least endurable while it lasted. In other words, all labour, even the commonest, must be made attractive.

How can this be done?—is the question the answer to which will take up the rest of this paper. In giving some

hints on this question, I know that, while all Socialists will agree with many of the suggestions made, some of them may seem to some strange and venturesome. These must be considered as being given without any intention of dogmatizing, and as merely expressing my own personal opinion.

From all that has been said already it follows that labour, to be attractive, must be directed towards some obviously useful end, unless in cases where it is undertaken voluntarily by each individual as a pastime. This element of obvious usefulness is all the more to be counted on in sweetening tasks otherwise irksome, since social morality, the responsibility of man towards the life of man, will, in the new order of things, take the place of theological morality, or the responsibility of man to some abstract idea. Next, the day's work will be short. This need not be insisted on. It is clear that with work unwasted it *can* be short. It is clear also that much work which is now a torment, would be easily endurable if it were much shortened.

Variety of work is the next point, and a most important one. To compel a man to do day after day the same task, without any hope of escape or change, means nothing short of turning his life into a prison-torment. Nothing but the tyranny of profit-grinding makes this necessary. A man might easily learn and practise at least three crafts, varying sedentary occupation with outdoor—occupation calling for the exercise of strong bodily energy for work in which the mind had more to do. There are few men, for instance, who would not wish to spend part of their lives in the most necessary and pleasantest of all work—cultivating the earth. One thing which will make this variety of employment possible will be the form that education will take in a socially ordered community. At present all education is directed towards the end of fitting people to take their places in the hierarchy of commerce—these as masters, those as workmen. The education of the masters is more ornamental than that of the workmen, but it is commercial still; and

even at the ancient universities learning is but little regarded, unless it can in the long run be made *to pay*. Due education is a totally different thing from this, and concerns itself in finding out what different people are fit for, and helping them along the road which they are inclined to take. In a duly ordered society, therefore, young people would be taught such handicrafts as they had a turn for as a part of their education, the discipline of their minds and bodies; and adults would also have opportunities of learning in the same schools, for the development of individual capacities would be of all things chiefly aimed at by education, instead, as now, the subordination of all capacities to the great end of "money-making" for oneself—or one's master. The amount of talent, and even genius, which the present system crushes, and which would be drawn out by such a system, would make our daily work easy and interesting.

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Under this head of variety I will note one product of industry which has suffered so much from commercialism that it can scarcely be said to exist, and is, indeed, so foreign from our epoch that I fear there are some who will find it difficult to understand what I have to say on the subject, which I nevertheless must say, since it is really a most important one. I mean that side of art which is, or ought to be, done by the ordinary workman while he is about his ordinary work, and which has got to be called, very properly, Popular Art. This art, I repeat, no longer exists now, having been killed by commercialism. But from the beginning of man's contest with Nature till the rise of the present capitalistic system, it was alive, and generally flourished. While it lasted, everything that was made by man was adorned by man, just as everything made by Nature is adorned by her. The craftsman, as he fashioned the thing he had under his hand, ornamented it so naturally and so entirely without conscious effort, that it is often difficult to distinguish where the mere utilitarian part of his work ended and the ornamental began. Now the origin of this art was the necessity that the workman felt for

variety in his work, and though the beauty produced by this desire was a great gift to the world, yet the obtaining variety and pleasure in the work by the workman was a matter of more importance still, for it stamped all labour with the impress of pleasure. All this has now quite disappeared from the work of civilization. If you wish to have ornament, you must pay specially for it, and the workman is compelled to produce ornament, as he is to produce other wares. He is compelled to pretend happiness in his work, so that the beauty produced by man's hand, which was once a solace to his labour, has now become an extra burden to him, and ornament is now but one of the follies of useless toil, and perhaps not the least irksome of its fetters.

Besides the short duration of labour, its conscious usefulness, and the variety which should go with it, there is another thing needed to make it attractive, and that is pleasant surroundings. The misery and squalor which we people of civilization bear with so much complacency as a necessary part of the manufacturing system, is just as necessary to the community at large as a proportionate amount of filth would be in the house of a private rich man. If such a man were to allow the cinders to be raked all over his drawing-room, and a privy to be established in each corner of his dining-room, if he habitually made a dust and refuse heap of his once beautiful garden, never washed his sheets or changed his tablecloth, and made his family sleep five in a bed, he would surely find himself in the claws of a commission *de lunatico*. But such acts of miserly folly are just what our present society is doing daily under the compulsion of a supposed necessity, which is nothing short of madness. I beg you to bring your commission of lunacy against civilization without more delay.

For all our crowded towns and bewildering factories are simply the outcome of the profit system. Capitalistic manufacture, capitalistic land-owning, and capitalistic exchange force men into big cities in order to manipulate them in the interests of capital; the same tyranny contracts the due

space of the factory so much that (for instance) the interior of a great weaving-shed is almost as ridiculous a spectacle as it is a horrible one. There is no other necessity for all this, save the necessity for grinding profits out of men's lives, and of producing cheap goods for the use (and subjection) of the slaves who grind. All labour is not yet driven into factories; often where it is there is no necessity for it, save again the profit-tyranny. People engaged in all such labour need by no means be compelled to pig together in close city quarters. There is no reason why they should not follow their occupations in quiet country homes, in industrial colleges, in small towns, or, in short, where they find it happiest for them to live.

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As to that part of labour which must be associated on a large scale, this very factory system, under a reasonable order of things (though to my mind there might still be drawbacks to it), would at least offer opportunities for a full and eager social life surrounded by many pleasures. The factories might be centres of intellectual activity also, and work in them might well be varied very much: the tending of the necessary machinery might to each individual be but a short part of the day's work. The other work might vary from raising food from the surrounding country to the study and practice of art and science. It is a matter of course that people engaged in such work, and being the masters of their own lives, would not allow any hurry or want of foresight to force them into enduring dirt, disorder, or want of room. Science duly applied would enable them to get rid of refuse, to minimize, if not wholly to destroy, all the inconveniences which at present attend the use of elaborate machinery, such as smoke, stench, and noise; nor would they endure that the buildings in which they worked or lived should be ugly blots on the fair face of the earth. Beginning by making their factories, buildings, and sheds decent and convenient like their homes, they would infallibly go on to make them not merely negatively good, inoffensive merely, but even beautiful, so that the

glorious art of architecture, now for some time slain by commercial greed, would be born again and flourish.

So, you see, I claim that work in a duly ordered community should be made attractive by the consciousness of usefulness, by its being carried on with intelligent interest, by variety, and by its being exercised amidst pleasurable surroundings. But I have also claimed, as we all do, that the day's work should not be wearisomely long. It may be said, "How can you make this last claim square with the others? If the work is to be so refined, will not the goods made be very expensive?"

I do admit, as I have said before, that some sacrifice will be necessary in order to make labour attractive. I mean that, if we *could* be contented in a free community to work in the same hurried, dirty, disorderly, heartless way as we do now, we might shorten our day's labour very much more than I suppose we shall do, taking all kinds of labour into account. But if we did, it would mean that our new-won freedom of condition would leave us listless and wretched, if not anxious, as we are now, which I hold is simply impossible. We should be contented to make the sacrifices necessary for raising our condition to the standard called out for as desirable by the whole community. Nor only so. We should, individually, be emulous to sacrifice quite freely still more of our time and our ease towards the raising of the standard of life. Persons, either by themselves or associated for such purposes, would freely, and for the love of the work and for its results—stimulated by the hope of the pleasure of creation—produce those ornaments of life for the service of all, which they are now bribed to produce (or pretend to produce) for the service of a few rich men. The experiment of a civilized community living wholly without art or literature has not yet been tried. The past degradation and corruption of civilization may force this denial of pleasure upon the society which will arise from its ashes. If that must be, we will accept the passing phase of utilitarianism as a foundation for the art which is to be. If the cripple and the

starveling disappear from our streets, if the earth nourish us all alike, if the sun shine for all of us alike, if to one and all of us the glorious drama of the earth—day and night, summer and winter—can be presented as a thing to understand and love, we can afford to wait awhile till we are purified from the shame of the past corruption, and till art arises again amongst people freed from the terror of the slave and the shame of the robber.

Useful Work *v.* Useless Toil

Meantime, in any case, the refinement, thoughtfulness, and deliberation of labour must indeed be paid for, but not by compulsion to labour long hours. Our epoch has invented machines which would have appeared wild dreams to the men of past ages, and of those machines we have as yet *made no use.*

They are called "labour-saving" machines—a commonly used phrase which implies what we expect of them; but we do not get what we expect. What they really do is to reduce the skilled labourer to the ranks of the unskilled, to increase the number of the "reserve army of labour"—that is, to increase the precariousness of life among the workers and to intensify the labour of those who serve the machines (as slaves their masters). All this they do by the way, while they pile up the profits of the employers of labour, or force them to expend those profits in bitter commercial war with each other. In a true society these miracles of ingenuity would be for the first time used for minimizing the amount of time spent in unattractive labour, which by their means might be so reduced as to be but a very light burden on each individual. All the more as these machines would most certainly be very much improved when it was no longer a question as to whether their improvement would "pay" the individual, but rather whether it would benefit the community.

So much for the ordinary use of machinery, which would probably, after a time, be somewhat restricted when men found out that there was no need for anxiety as to mere subsistence, and learned to take an interest and pleasure in

handiwork which, done deliberately and thoughtfully, could be made more attractive than machine work.

Again, as people freed from the daily terror of starvation find out what they really wanted, being no longer compelled by anything but their own needs, they would refuse to produce the mere inanities which are now called luxuries, or the poison and trash now called cheap wares. No one would make plush breeches when there were no flunkies to wear them, nor would anybody waste his time over making oleomargarine when no one was *compelled* to abstain from real butter. Adulteration laws are only needed in a society of thieves—and in such a society they are a dead letter.

Socialists are often asked how work of the rougher and more repulsive kind could be carried out in the new condition of things. To attempt to answer such questions fully or authoritatively would be attempting the impossibility of constructing a scheme of a new society out of the materials of the old, before we knew which of those materials would disappear and which endure through the evolution which is leading us to the great change. Yet it is not difficult to conceive of some arrangement whereby those who did the roughest work should work for the shortest spells. And again, what is said above of the variety of work applies specially here. Once more I say, that for a man to be the whole of his life hopelessly engaged in performing one repulsive and never-ending task, is an arrangement fit enough for the hell imagined by theologians, but scarcely fit for any other form of society. Lastly, if this rougher work were of any special kind, we may suppose that special volunteers would be called on to perform it, who would surely be forthcoming, unless men in a state of freedom should lose the sparks of manliness which they possessed as slaves.

And yet if there be any work which cannot be made other than repulsive, either by the shortness of its duration or the intermittency of its recurrence, or by the sense of special and peculiar usefulness (and therefore honour) in the mind of the man who performs it freely—if there be any work

which cannot be but a torment to the worker, what then? Well, then, let us see if the heavens will fall on us if we leave it undone, for it were better that they should. The produce of such work cannot be worth the price of it. Useful Work *v.* Useless Toil

Now we have seen that the semi-theological dogma that all labour, under any circumstances, is a blessing to the labourer, is hypocritical and false; that, on the other hand, labour is good when due hope of rest and pleasure accompanies it. We have weighed the work of civilization in the balance and found it wanting, since hope is mostly lacking to it, and therefore we see that civilization has bred a dire curse for men. But we have seen also that the work of the world might be carried on in hope and with pleasure if it were not wasted by folly and tyranny, by the perpetual strife of opposing classes.

It is Peace, therefore, which we need in order that we may live and work in hope and with pleasure. Peace so much desired, if we may trust men's words, but which has been so continually and steadily rejected by them in deeds. But for us, let us set our hearts on it and win it at whatever cost.

What the cost may be, who can tell? Will it be possible to win peace peaceably? Alas, how can it be? We are so hemmed in by wrong and folly, that in one way or other we must always be fighting against them: our own lives may see no end to the struggle, perhaps no obvious hope of the end. It may be that the best we can hope to see is that struggle getting sharper and bitterer day by day, until it breaks out openly at last into the slaughter of men by actual warfare instead of by the slower and crueller methods of "peaceful" commerce. If we live to see that, we shall live to see much; for it will mean the rich classes grown conscious of their own wrong and robbery, and consciously defending them by open violence; and then the end will be drawing near.

But in any case, and whatever the nature of our strife for

peace may be, if we only aim at it steadily and with singleness of heart, and ever keep it in view, a reflection from that peace of the future will illumine the turmoil and trouble of our lives, whether the trouble be seemingly petty, or obviously tragic; and we shall, in our hopes at least, live the lives of men: nor can the present times give us any reward greater than that.

DAWN OF A NEW EPOCH

PERHAPS some of my readers may think that the above title is not a correct one: it may be said, a new epoch is always dawning, change is always going on, and it goes on so gradually that we do not know when we are out of an old epoch and into a new one. There is truth in that, at least to this extent, that no age can see itself: we must stand some way off before the confused picture with its rugged surface can resolve itself into its due order, and seem to be something with a definite purpose carried through all its details. Nevertheless, when we look back on history we do distinguish periods in the lapse of time that are not merely arbitrary ones, we note the early growth of the ideas which are to form the new order of things, we note their development into the transitional period, and finally the new epoch is revealed to us bearing in its full development, unseen as yet, the seeds of the newer order still which shall transform it in its turn into something else.

Moreover, there are periods in which even those alive in them become more or less conscious of the change which is always going on; the old ideas which were once so exciting to men's imaginations, now cease to move them, though they may be accepted as dull and necessary platitudes: the material circumstances of man's life which were once only struggled with in detail, and only according to a kind of law made manifest in their working, are in such times conscious of change, and are only accepted under protest until some means can be found to alter them. The old and dying order, once silent and all-powerful, tries to express itself violently, and becomes at once noisy and weak. The nascent order once too weak to be conscious of need of expression, or capable of it if it were, becomes conscious now and finds a voice. The silent sap of the years is being laid aside for open assault; the men are gathering under arms in the trenches, and the forlorn hope is ready, no longer trifling

with little solacements of the time of weary waiting, but looking forward to mere death or the joy of victory.

Now I think, and some who read this will agree with me, that we are now living in one of these times of conscious change; we not only are, but we feel also ourselves to be living between the old and the new; we are expecting something to happen, as the phrase goes: at such times it behoves us to understand what is the old which is dying, what is the new which is coming into existence? That is a question practically important to us all, since these periods of conscious change are also, in one way or other, times of serious combat, and each of us, if he does not look to it and learn to understand what is going on, may find himself fighting on the wrong side, the side with which he really does not sympathize.

What is the combat we are now entering upon—who is it to be fought between? Absolutism and Democracy, perhaps some will answer. Not quite, I think; that contest was practically settled by the great French Revolution; it is only its embers which are burning now: or at least that is so in the countries which are not belated, like Russia, for instance. Democracy, or at least what used to be considered Democracy, is now triumphant; and though it is true that there are countries where freedom of speech is repressed besides Russia, as *e.g.*, Germany and Ireland,* that only happens when the rulers of the triumphant Democracy are beginning to be afraid of the new order of things, now becoming conscious of itself, and are being driven into reaction in consequence. No, it is not Absolutism and Democracy as the French Revolution understood those two words that are the enemies now: the issue is deeper than it was; the two foes are now Mastership and Fellowship. This is a far more serious quarrel than the old one, and involves a much completer revolution. The grounds of conflict are really

* And the brick and mortar country London, also, it seems (Feb. 1888).

quite different. Democracy said and says, men shall not be the masters of others because hereditary privilege has made a race or a family so, and they happen to belong to such race; they shall individually grow into being the masters of others by the development of certain qualities under a system of authority which *artificially* protects the wealth of every man, if he has acquired it in accordance with this artificial system, from the interference of every other, or from all others combined.

The new order of things says, on the contrary, why have masters at all? let us be *fellows* working in the harmony of association for the common good, that is, for the greatest happiness and completest development of every human being in the community.

This ideal and hope of a new society founded on industrial peace and forethought, bearing with it its own ethics, aiming at a new and higher life for all men, has received the general name of Socialism, and it is my firm belief that it is destined to supersede the old order of things founded on industrial war, and to be the next step in the progress of humanity.

Now, since I must explain further what are the aims of Socialism, the ideal of the new epoch, I find that I must begin by explaining to you what is the constitution of the old order which it is destined to supplant. If I can make that clear to you, I shall have also made clear to you the first aim of Socialism: for I have said that the present and decaying order of things, like those which have gone before it, has to be propped up by a system of artificial authority; when that artificial authority has been swept away, harmonious association will be felt by all men to be a necessity of their happy and undegraded existence on the earth, and Socialism will become the condition under which we shall all live, and it will develop naturally, and probably with no violent conflict, whatever detailed system may be necessary: I say the struggle will not be over these details, which

will surely vary according to the difference of unchangeable natural surroundings, but over the question, shall it be mastership or fellowship?

Let us see then what is the condition of society under the last development of mastership, the commercial system, which has taken the place of the Feudal system.

Like all other systems of society, it is founded on the necessity of man conquering his subsistence from Nature by labour, and also, like most other systems that we know of, it presupposes the unequal distribution of labour among different classes of society, and the unequal distribution of the results of that labour: it does not differ in that respect from the system which it supplanted; it has only altered the method whereby that unequal distribution should be arranged. There are still rich people and poor people amongst us, as there were in the Middle Ages; nay, there is no doubt that, relatively at least to the sum of wealth existing, the rich are richer and the poor are poorer now than they were then. However that may be, in any case now as then there are people who have much work and little wealth living beside other people who have much wealth and little work. The richest are still the idlest, and those who work hardest and perform the most painful tasks are the worst rewarded for their labour.

To me, and I should hope to my readers, this seems grossly unfair; and I may remind you here that the world has always had a sense of its injustice. For century after century, while society has strenuously bolstered up this injustice forcibly and artificially, it has professed belief in philosophies, codes of ethics, and religions which have inculcated justice and fair dealing between men: nay, some of them have gone so far as to bid us bear one another's burdens, and have put before men the duty, and in the long run the pleasure, of the strong working for the weak, the wise for the foolish, the helpful for the helpless; and yet these precepts of morality have been set aside in practice as persistently as they have been preached in theory; and naturally so, since

they attack the very basis of class society. I as a Socialist am bound to preach them to you once more, assuring you that they are no mere foolish dreams bidding us to do what we now must acknowledge to be impossible, but reasonable rules of action, good for our defence against the tyranny of Nature. Anyhow, honest men have the choice before them of either putting these theories in practice or rejecting them altogether. If they will but face that dilemma, I think we shall soon have a new world of it; yet I fear they will find it hard to do so: the theory is old, and we have got used to it and its form of words: the practice is new, and would involve responsibilities we have not yet thought much of.

Now the great difference between our present system and that of the feudal period is that, as far as the conditions of life are concerned, all distinction of classes is abolished except that between rich and poor: society is thus simplified; the arbitrary distinction is gone, the real one remains and is far more stringent than the arbitrary one was. Once all society was rude, there was little real difference between the gentleman and the non-gentleman, and you had to dress them differently from one another in order to distinguish them. But now a well-to-do man is a refined and cultivated being, enjoying to the full his share of the conquest over Nature which the modern world has achieved, while the poor man is rude and degraded, and has no share in the wealth conquered by modern science from Nature: he is certainly no better as to material condition than the serf of the Middle Ages, perhaps he is worse: to my mind he is at least worse than the savage living in a good climate.

I do not think that any thoughtful man seriously denies this: let us try to see what brings it about; let us see it as clearly as we all see that the hereditary privilege of the noble caste, and the consequent serf slavery of the workers of the Middle Ages, brought about the peculiar conditions of that period.

Society is now divided between two classes, those who monopolize all the means of the production of wealth save

one; and those who possess nothing except that one, the Power of Labour. That power of labour is useless to its possessors and cannot be exercised without the help of the other means of production; but those who have nothing but labour-power—*i.e.*, who have no means of making others work for them, must work for themselves in order to live; and they must therefore apply to the owners of the means of fructifying labour—*i.e.*, the land, machinery, &c., for leave to work that they may live. The possessing class (as for short we will call them) are quite prepared to grant this leave, and indeed they must grant it if they are to use the labour-power of the non-possessing class for their own advantage, which is their special privilege. But that privilege enables them to *compel* the non-possessing class to sell them their labour-power on terms which ensure the continuance of their monopoly. These terms are at the outset very simple. The possessing class, or masters, allow the men just so much of the wealth produced by their labour as will give them such a livelihood as is considered necessary at the time, and will permit them to breed and rear children to a working age: that is the simple condition of the "bargain" which obtains when the labour-power required is low in quality, what is called unskilled labour, and when the workers are too weak or ignorant to combine so as to threaten the masters with some form of rebellion. When skilled labour is wanted, and the labourer has consequently cost more to produce, and is rarer to be found, the price of the article is higher: as also when the commodity labour takes to thinking and remembers that after all it is also *men*, and as aforesaid holds out threats to the masters; in that case they for their part generally think it prudent to give way, when the competition of the market allows them to do so, and so the standard of livelihood for the workers rises.

But to speak plainly, the greater part of the workers, in spite of strikes and Trades' Unions, do get little more than a bare subsistence wage, and when they grow sick or old they would die outright if it were not for the refuge afforded them

by the workhouse, which is purposely made as prison-like and wretched as possible, in order to prevent the lower-paid workers from taking refuge in it before the time of their *industrial* death. Dawn of a New Epoch

Now comes the question as to how the masters are able to force the men to sell their commodity labour-power so dirt-cheap without treating them as the ancients treated their slaves—*i.e.*, with the whip. Well, of course you understand that the master having paid his workmen what they can live upon, and having paid for the wear and tear of machinery and other expenses of that kind, has for his share whatever remains over and above, *the whole of which he gets from the exercise of the labour-power possessed by the worker:* he is anxious therefore to make the most of this privilege, and competes with his fellow-manufacturers to the utmost in the market: so that the distribution of wares is organized on a gambling basis, and as a consequence many more hands are needed when trade is brisk than when it is slack, or even in an ordinary condition: under the stimulus also of the lust for acquiring this surplus value of labour, the great machines of our epoch were invented and are yearly improved, and they act on labour in a threefold way: first they get rid of many hands; next they lower the quality of the labour required, so that skilled work is wanted less and less; thirdly, the improvement in them forces the workers to work harder while they are at work, as notably in the cotton-spinning industry. Also in most trades women and children are employed, to whom it is not even pretended that a subsistence wage is given. Owing to all these causes, the reserve army of labour necessary to our present system of manufactures for the gambling-market, the introduction of labour-saving machines (labour saved for the master, mind you, not the man), and the intensifying of the labour while it lasts, the employment of the auxiliary labour of women and children: owing to all this there are in ordinary years even, not merely in specially bad years like the current one,* more workers

*1886, to wit.

than there is work for them to do. The workers therefore undersell one another in disposing of their one commodity, labour-power, and are *forced* to do so, or they would not be allowed to work, and therefore would have to starve or go to the prison called the workhouse. This is why the masters at the present day are able to dispense with the exercise of obvious violence which in bygone times they used towards their slaves.

This then is the first distinction between the two great classes of modern Society: the upper class possesses wealth, the lower lacks wealth; but there is another distinction to which I will now draw your attention: the class which lacks wealth is the class that produces it, the class that possesses it does not produce it, it consumes it only. If by any chance the so-called lower class were to perish or leave the community, production of wealth would come to a standstill, until the wealth-owners had learned how to produce, until they had descended from their position, and had taken the place of their former slaves. If, on the contrary, the wealth-owners were to disappear, production of wealth would at the worst be only hindered for awhile, and probably would go on pretty much as it does now.

But you may say, though it is certain that some of the wealth-owners, as landlords, holders of funds, and the like, do nothing, yet there are many of them who work hard. Well, that is true, and perhaps nothing so clearly shows the extreme folly of the present system than this fact that there are so many able and industrious men employed by it, in working hard at—nothing: nothing or worse. They work, but they do not produce.

It is true that some useful occupations are in the hands of the privileged classes, physic, education, and the fine arts, *e.g.* The men who work at these occupations are certainly working usefully; and all that we can say against them is that they are sometimes paid too high in proportion to the pay of other useful persons, which high pay is given them in recognition of their being the parasites of the possessing

classes. But even as to numbers these are not a very large part of the possessors of wealth, and, as to the wealth they hold, it is quite insignificant compared with that held by those who do nothing useful. Dawn of a New Epoch

Of these last, some, as we all agree, do not pretend to do anything except amuse themselves, and probably these are the least harmful of the useless classes. Then there are others who follow occupations which would have no place in a reasonable condition of society, as, *e.g.*, lawyers, judges, jailers, and soldiers of the higher grades, and most Government officials. Finally comes the much greater group of those who are engaged in gambling or fighting for their individual shares of the tribute which their class compels the working-class to yield to it: these are the group that one calls broadly business men, the conductors of our commerce, if you please to call them so.

To extract a good proportion of this tribute, and to keep as much as possible of it when extracted for oneself, is the main business of life for these men, that is, for most well-to-do and rich people; it is called, quite inaccurately, "money-making"; and those who are most successful in this occupation are, in spite of all hypocritical pretences to the contrary, the persons most respected by the public.

A word or two as to the tribute extracted from the workers as aforesaid. It is no trifle, but amounts to at least two-thirds of all that the worker produces; but you must understand that it is not all taken directly from the workman by his immediate employer, but by the employing class. Besides the tribute or profit of the direct employer, which is in all cases as much as he can get amidst his competition or war with other employers, the worker has also to pay taxes in various forms, and the greater part of the wealth so extorted is at the best merely wasted: and remember, whoever *seems* to pay the taxes, labour in the long run is the only real taxpayer. Then he has to pay house-rent, and very much heavier rent in proportion to his earnings than well-to-do people have. He has also to pay the commission of the middle-men who distri-

bute the goods which he has made, in a way so wasteful that now all thinking people cry out against it, though they are quite helpless against it in our present society. Finally, he has often to pay an extra tax in the shape of a contribution to a benefit society or trades' union, which is really a tax on the precariousness of his employment caused by the gambling of his masters in the market. In short, besides the profit or the result of unpaid labour which he yields to his immediate master he has to give back a large part of his wages to the class of which his master is a part.

The privilege of the possessing class therefore consists in their living on this tribute, they themselves either not working or working unproductively—*i.e.*, living on the labour of others; no otherwise than as the master of ancient days lived on the labour of his slave, or as the baron lived on the labour of his serf. If the capital of the rich man consists of land, he is able to force a tenant to improve his land for him and pay him tribute in the form of rack-rent; and at the end of the transaction has his land again, generally improved, so that he can begin again and go on for ever, he and his heirs, doing nothing, a mere burden on the community for ever, while others are working for him. If he has houses on his land he has rent for them also, often receiving the value of the building many times over, and in the end house and land once more. Not seldom a piece of barren ground or swamp, worth nothing in itself, becomes a source of huge fortune to him from the development of a town or a district, and he pockets the results of the labour of thousands upon thousands of men, and calls it his property: or the earth beneath the surface is found to be rich in coal or minerals, and again he must be paid vast sums for allowing others to labour them into marketable wares, to which labour he contributes nothing.

Or again, if his capital consists of cash, he goes into the labour market and buys the labour-power of men, women, and children, and uses it for the production of wares which shall bring him in a profit, buying it of course at the lowest price that he can, availing himself of their necessities to

keep their livelihood down to the lowest point which they will bear: which indeed he *must* do, or he himself will be overcome in the war with his fellow-capitalists. Neither in this case does he do any useful work, and he need not do any semblance of it, since he may buy the brain-power of managers at a somewhat higher rate than he buys the hand-power of the ordinary workman. But even when he does seem to be doing something, and receives the pompous title of "organizer of labour," he is not really organizing *labour*, but the battle with his immediate enemies, the other capitalists, who are in the same line of business with himself.

Furthermore, though it is true, as I have said, that the working-class are the only producers, yet only a part of them are allowed to produce usefully; for the men of the non-producing classes having often much more wealth than they can *use* are forced to *waste* it in mere luxuries and follies, that on the one hand harm themselves, and on the other withdraw a very large part of the workers from useful work, thereby compelling those who do produce usefully to work the harder and more grievously: in short, the essential accompaniment of the system is waste.

How could it be otherwise, since it is a system of war? I have mentioned incidentally that all the employers of labour are at war with each other, and you will probably see that, according to my account of the relations between the two great classes, they also are at war. Each can only gain at the other's loss: the employing class is forced to make the most of its privilege, the possession of the means for the exercise of labour, and whatever it gets to itself can only be got at the expense of the working-class; and that class in its turn can only raise its standard of livelihood at the expense of the possessing class; it is *forced* to yield as little tribute to it as it can help; there is therefore constant war always going on between these two classes, whether they are conscious of it or not.

To recapitulate: In our modern society there are two classes, a useful and a useless class; the useless class is called

the upper, the useful the lower class. The useless or upper class, having the monopoly of all the means of the production of wealth save the power of labour, can and does compel the useful or lower class to work for its own disadvantage, and for the advantage of the upper class; nor will the latter allow the useful class to work on any other terms. This arrangement necessarily means an increasing contest, first of the classes one against the other, and next of the individuals of each class among themselves.

Most thinking people admit the truth of what I have just stated, but many of them believe that the system, though obviously unjust and wasteful, is necessary (though perhaps they cannot give their reasons for their belief), and so they can see nothing for it but palliating the worst evils of the system: but, since the various palliatives in fashion at one time or another have failed each in its turn, I call upon them, firstly, to consider whether the system itself might not be changed, and secondly, to look round and note the signs or approaching change.

Let us remember first that even savages live, though they have poor tools, no machinery, and no co-operation, in their work: but as soon as a man begins to use good tools and work with some kind of co-operation he becomes able to produce more than enough for his own bare necessaries. All industrial society is founded on that fact, even from the time when workmen were mere chattel slaves. What a strange society then is this of ours, wherein while one set of people cannot use their wealth, they have so much, but are obliged to waste it, another set are scarcely if at all better than those hapless savages who have neither tools nor co-operation! Surely if this cannot be set right, civilized mankind must write itself down a civilized fool.

Here is the workman now, thoroughly organized for production, working for production with complete co-operation, and through marvellous machines; surely if a slave in Aristotle's time could do more than keep himself alive, the present workman can do much more—as we all very well

know that he can. Why therefore should he be otherwise than in a comfortable condition? Simply because of the class system, which with one hand plunders, and with the other wastes the wealth won by the workman's labour. If the workman had the full results of his labour he would in all cases be comfortably off, if he were working in an unwasteful way. But in order to work unwastefully he must work for his own livelihood, and not to enable another man to live without producing: if he has to sustain another man in idleness who is capable of working for himself, he is treated unfairly; and, believe me, he will only do so as long as he is compelled to submit by ignorance and brute force. Well, then, he has a right to claim the wealth produced by his labour, and in consequence to insist that all shall produce who are able to do so; but also undoubtedly his labour must be organized, or he will soon find himself relapsing into the condition of a savage. But in order that his labour may be organized properly he must have only one enemy to contend with—Nature to wit, who as it were eggs him on to the conflict against herself, and is grateful to him for overcoming her; a friend in the guise of an enemy. There must be no contention of man with man, but *association* instead; so only can labour be really organized, harmoniously organized. But harmony cannot co-exist with contention for individual gain: men must work for the common gain if the world is to be raised out of its present misery; therefore that claim of the workman (that is of every able man) must be subject to the fact that he is but a part of a harmonious whole: he is worthless without the co-operation of his fellows, who help him according to their capacities: he ought to feel, and will feel when he has his right senses, that he is working for his own interest when he is working for that of the community.

Dawn of a New Epoch

So working, his work must always be profitable, therefore no obstacle must be thrown in the way of his work: the means whereby his labour-power can be exercised must be free to him. The privilege of the proprietary class must come to an end. Remember that at present the custom is that

a person so privileged is in the position of a man (with a policeman or so to help) guarding the gate of a field which will supply livelihood to whomsoever can work in it: crowds of people who don't want to die come to that gate; but there stands law and order, and says "pay me five shillings before you go in"; and he or she that hasn't the five shillings has to stay outside, and die—or live in the workhouse. Well, that must be done away with; the field must be free to everybody that can use it. To throw aside even this transparent metaphor, those means of the fructification of labour, the land, machinery, capital, means of transit, &c., which are now monopolized by those who cannot use them, but who abuse them to force unpaid labour out of others, must be free to those who can use them; that is to say, the workers properly organized for production; but you must remember that this will wrong no man, because as all will do some service to the community—*i.e.*, as there will be no non-producing class, the organized workers will be the whole community, there will be no one left out.

Society will thus be recast, and labour will be free from all compulsion except the compulsion of Nature, which gives us nothing for nothing. It would be futile to attempt to give you details of the way in which this would be carried out; since the very essence of it is freedom and the abolition of all arbitrary or artificial authority; but I will ask you to understand one thing: you will no doubt want to know what is to become of private property under such a system, which at first sight would not seem to forbid the accumulation of wealth, and along with that accumulation the formation of new classes of rich and poor.

Now private property as at present understood implies the holding of wealth by an individual as against all others, whether the holder can use it or not: he may, and not seldom he does, accumulate capital, or the stored-up labour of past generations, and neither use it himself nor allow others to use it: he may, and often he does, engross the first necessity of labour, land, and neither use it himself or allow any one else

to use it; and though it is clear that in each case he is injuring the community, the law is sternly on his side. In any case a rich man accumulates property, not for his own use, but in order that he may evade with impunity the law of Nature which bids man labour for his livelihood, and also that he may enable his children to do the same, that he and they may belong to the upper or useless class: it is not wealth that he accumulates, well-being, well-doing, bodily and mental; he soon comes to the end of his real needs in that respect, even when they are most exacting: it is power over others, what our forefathers called *riches*, that he collects; power (as we have seen) to force other people to live for his advantage poorer lives than they should live. Understand that that *must* be the result of the possession of *riches*.

Now this power to compel others to live poorly Socialism would abolish entirely, and in that sense would make an end of private property: nor would it need to make laws to prevent accumulation artificially when once people had found out that they could employ themselves, and that thereby every man could enjoy the results of his own labour: for Socialism bases the rights of the individual to possess wealth on his being able to use that wealth for his own personal needs, and, labour being properly organized, every person, male or female, not in nonage or otherwise incapacitated from working, would have full opportunity to produce wealth and thereby to satisfy his own personal needs; if those needs went in any direction beyond those of an average man, he would have to make personal sacrifices in order to satisfy them; he would have, for instance, to work longer hours, or to forego some luxury that he did not care for in order to obtain something which he very much desired: so doing he would at the worst injure no one: and you will clearly see that there is no other choice for him between so doing and his forcing some one else to forego *his* special desires; and this latter proceeding by the way, when it is done without the sanction of the most powerful part of society, is called *theft*; though on the big scale and duly sanc-

tioned by artificial laws, it is, as we have seen, the groundwork of our present system. Once more, that system refuses permission to people to produce unless under artificial restrictions; under Socialism, every one who could produce would be free to produce, so that the price of an article would be just the cost of its production, and what we now call profit would no longer exist: thus, for instance, if a person wanted chairs, he would accumulate them till he had as many as he could use, and then he would stop, since he would not have been able to buy them for less than their cost of production and could not sell them for more: in other words, they would be nothing else than chairs; under the present system they may be means of compulsion and destruction as formidable as loaded rifles.

No one therefore would dispute with a man the possession of what he had acquired without injury to others, and what he could use without injuring them, and it would so remove temptations toward the abuse of possession, that probably no laws would be necessary to prevent it.

A few words now as to the differentiation of reward of labour, as I know my readers are sure to want an exposition of the Socialist views here as to those who direct labour or who have specially excellent faculties towards production. And, first, I will look on the super-excellent workman as an article presumably needed by the community; and then say that, as with other articles so with this, the community must pay the cost of his production: for instance, it will have to seek him out, to develop his special capacities, and satisfy any needs he may have (if any) beyond those of an average man, so long as the satisfaction of those needs is not hurtful to the community.

Furthermore, you cannot give him more than he can use, so he will not ask for more, and will not take it: it is true that his work may be more special than another's, but it is not more necessary if you have organized labour properly; the ploughman and the fisherman are as necessary to society as the scientist or the artist, I will not say more necessary:

neither is the difficulty of producing the more special and excellent work at all proportionate to its speciality or excellence: the higher workman produces his work as easily perhaps as the lower does his work; if he does not do so, you must give him extra leisure, extra means for supplying the waste of power in him, but you can give him nothing more. The only reward that you *can* give the excellent workman is opportunity for developing and exercising his excellent capacity. I repeat, you *can* give him nothing more worth his having: all other rewards are either illusory or harmful. I must say in passing, that our present system of dealing with what is called a man of genius is utterly absurd: we cruelly starve him and repress his capacity when he is young; we foolishly pamper and flatter him and again repress his capacity when he is middle-aged or old: we get the least out of him, not the most.

These last words concern mere rarities in the way of workmen; but in this respect it is only a matter of degree; the point of the whole thing is this, that the director of labour is in his place because he is fit for it, not by a mere accident; being fit for it, he does it easier than he would do other work, and needs no more compensation for the wear and tear of life than another man does, and not needing it will not claim it, since it would be no use to him; his special reward for his special labour is, I repeat, that he can do it easily, and so does not feel it a burden; nay, since he can do it *well* he likes doing it, since indeed the main pleasure of life is the exercise of energy in the development of our special capacities. Again, as regards the workmen who are under his direction, he needs no special dignity or authority; they know well enough that so long as he fulfils his function and really does direct them, if they do not heed him it will be at the cost of their labour being more irksome and harder. All this, in short, is what is meant by the organization of labour, which is, in other words, finding out what work such and such people are fittest for and leaving them free to do that: we won't take the trouble to do that now, with the result that people's best

faculties are wasted, and that work is a heavy burden to them, which they naturally shirk as much as they can; it should be rather a pleasure to them: and I say straight out that, unless we find some means to make all work more or less pleasurable, we shall never escape from the great tyranny of the modern world.

Having mentioned the difference between the competitive and commercial ideas on the subject of the individual holding of wealth and the relative position of different groups of workmen, I will very briefly say something on what for want of a better word I must call the political position which we take up, or at least what we look forward to in the long run. The substitution of association for competition is the foundation of Socialism, and will run through all acts done under it, and this must act as between nations as well as between individuals: when profits can no more be made, there will be no necessity for holding together masses of men to draw together the greatest proportion of profit to their locality, or to the real or imaginary union of persons and corporations which is now called a nation. What we now call a nation is a body whose function it is to assert the special welfare of its incorporated members at the expense of all other similar bodies: the death of competition will deprive it of this function; since there will be no attack there need be no defence, and it seems to me that this function being taken away from the nation it can have no other, and therefore must cease to exist as a political entity. On this side of the movement opinion is growing steadily. It is clear that, quite apart from Socialism, the idea of local administration is pushing out that of centralized government: to take a remarkable case: in the French Revolution of 1793, the most advanced party was centralizing: in the latest French Revolution, that of the Commune of 1871, it was federalist. Or take Ireland: the success which is to-day attending the struggles of Ireland for independence is, I am quite sure, owing to the spread of this idea: it no longer seems a monstrous proposition to liberal-minded Englishmen that a country should administer its

own affairs: the feeling that it is not only just, but also very convenient to all parties for it to do so, is extinguishing the prejudices fostered by centuries of oppressive and wasteful mastership. And I believe that Ireland will show that her claim for self-government is not made on behalf of national rivalry, but rather on behalf of genuine independence; the consideration, on the one hand, of the needs of her own population, and, on the other, goodwill towards that of other localities. Well, the spread of this idea will make our political work as Socialists the easier; men will at last come to see that the only way to avoid the tyranny and waste of bureaucracy is by the Federation of Independent Communities: their federation being for definite purposes: for furthering the organization of labour, by ascertaining the real demand for commodities, and so avoiding waste: for organizing the distribution of goods, the migration of persons—in short, the friendly intercommunication of people whose interests are common, although the circumstances of their natural surroundings made necessary differences of life and manners between them.

I have thus sketched something of the outline of Socialism, by showing that its aim is first to get rid of the monopoly of the means of fructifying labour, so that labour may be free to all, and its resulting wealth may not be engrossed by a few, and so cause the misery and degradation of the many: and, secondly, that it aims at organizing labour so that none of it may be wasted, using as a means thereto the free development of each man's capacity; and, thirdly, that it aims at getting rid of national rivalry, which in point of fact means a condition of perpetual war, sometimes of the money-bag, sometimes of the bullet, and substituting for this worn-out superstition a system of free communities living in harmonious federation with each other, managing their own affairs by the free consent of their members; yet acknowledging some kind of centre whose function it would be to protect the principle whose practice the communities should carry out; till at last those principles would be recognized by every

one always and intuitively, when the last vestiges of centralization would die out.

I am well aware that this complete Socialism, which is sometimes called Communism, cannot be realized all at once; society will be changed from its basis when we make the form of robbery called profit impossible by giving labour full and free access to the means of its fructification—*i.e.*, to raw material. The demand for this emancipation of labour is the basis on which all Socialists may unite. On more indefinite grounds they cannot meet other groups of politicians; they can only rejoice at seeing the ground cleared of controversies which are really dead, in order that the last controversy may be settled that we can at present foresee, and the question solved as to whether or no it is necessary, as some people think it is, that society should be composed of two groups of dishonest persons, slaves submitting to be slaves yet for ever trying to cheat their masters, and masters conscious of their having no support for their dishonesty of eating the common stock without adding to it save the mere organization of brute force, which they have to assert for ever in all details of life against the natural desire of man to be free.

It may be hoped that we of this generation may be able to prove that it is unnecessary; but it will, doubt it not, take many generations yet to prove that it is necessary for such degradation to last as long as humanity does; and when that is finally proved we shall at least have one hope left—that humanity will not last long.

LECTURES ON SOCIALISM

ART, WEALTH, AND RICHES: AN ADDRESS DELIVERED AT A JOINT CONVERSAZIONE OF MANCHESTER SOCIETIES AT THE ROYAL INSTITUTION, MANCHESTER, 6TH MARCH 1883.

ART, Wealth, and Riches are the words I have written at the head of this paper. Some of you may think that the two latter words, wealth and riches, are tautologous; but I cannot admit it. In truth there are no real synonyms in any language, I mean unless in the case of words borrowed from another tongue; and in the early days of our own language no one would have thought of using the word rich as a synonym for wealthy. He would have understood a wealthy man to mean one who had plentiful livelihood, and a rich man one who had great dominion over his fellow-men. Alexander the Rich, Canute the Rich, Alfred the Rich; these are familiar words enough in the early literature of the North; the adjective would scarcely be used except of a great king or chief, a man pre-eminent above other kings and chiefs. Now, without being a stickler for etymological accuracy, I must say that I think there are cases where modern languages have lost power by confusing two words into one meaning, and that this is one of them. I shall ask your leave therefore to use the words wealth and riches somewhat in the way in which our forefathers did, and to understand wealth as signifying the means of living a decent life, and riches the means for exercising dominion over other people. Thus understood the words are widely different to my mind; yet, indeed, if you say that the difference is but one of degree I must needs admit it; just so it is between the shepherd's dog and the wolf. Their respective views on the subject of mutton differ only in degree.

Anyhow, I think the following question is an important one: Which shall art belong to, wealth or riches? Whose servant shall she be? or rather, Shall she be the slave of riches, or the friend and helpmate of wealth? Indeed, if I put the question in another form, and ask: Is art to be limited

to a narrow class who only care for it in a very languid way, or is it to be the solace and pleasure of the whole people? the question finally comes to this: Are we to have art or the pretence of art? It is like enough that to many or even most of you the question will seem of no practical importance. To most people the present condition of art does seem in the main to be the only condition it could exist in among cultivated people, and they are (in a languid way, as I said) content with its present aims and tendencies. For myself, I am so discontented with the present conditions of art, and the matter seems to me so serious, that I am forced to try to make other people share my discontent, and am this evening risking the committal of a breach of good manners by standing before you, grievance in hand, on an occasion like this, when everybody present, I feel sure, is full of goodwill both towards the arts and towards the public. My only excuse is my belief in the sincerity of your wish to know any serious views that can be taken of a matter so important. So I will say that the question I have asked, whether art is to be the helpmate of wealth or the slave of riches, is of great practical import, if indeed art is important to the human race, which I suppose no one here will gainsay.

Now I will ask those who think art is in a normal and healthy condition to explain the meaning of the enthusiasm (which I am glad to learn the people of Manchester share) shown of late years for the foundation and extension of museums, a great part of whose contents is but fragments of the household goods of past ages. Why do cultivated, sober, reasonable people, not lacking in a due sense of the value of money, give large sums for scraps of figured cloth, pieces of roughly made pottery, worm-eaten carving, or battered metal work, and treasure them up in expensive public buildings under the official guardianship of learned experts? Well, we all know that these things are supposed to teach us something; they are educational. The type of all our museums, that at South Kensington, is distinctly an educational establishment. Nor is what they are supposed

to teach us mere dead history; these things are studied carefully and laboriously by men who intend making their living by the art of design. Ask any expert of any school of opinion as to art what he thinks of the desirability of those who are to make designs for the ornamental part of industrial art studying from these remains of past ages, and he will be certain to answer you that such study is indispensable to a designer. So you see this is what it comes to. It is not to the best works of our own time that a student is sent; no master or expert could honestly tell him that that would do him good, but to the mere wreckage of a bygone art, things which, when they were new, could be bought for the most part in every shop and market-place. Well, need one ask what sort of a figure the wreckage of our ornamental art would cut in a museum of the twenty-fourth century? The plain truth is that people who have studied these matters know that these remnants of the past give tokens of an art which fashioned goods not only better than we do now, but different in kind, and better because they are different in kind, and were made in quite other ways than we make such things.

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Before we ask why they were so much better, and why they differ in kind and not merely in degree of goodness, I want you to note specially once more that they were common wares, bought and sold in any market. I want you to note that, in spite of the tyranny and violence of the days when they were fashioned, the beauty of which they formed a part surrounded all life; that then, at all events, art was the helpmate of wealth and not the slave of riches. True it is that then as now rich men spent great sums of money in ornament of all kinds, and no doubt the lower classes were wretchedly poor (as they are now); nevertheless, the art that rich men got differed only in abundance and splendour of material from what other people could compass. The thing to remember is that then everything which was made by man's hand was more or less beautiful.

Contrast that with the state of art at present, and then say

if my unmannerly discontent is not somewhat justified. So far from everything that is made by man being beautiful, almost all ordinary wares that are made by civilized man are shabbily and pretentiously ugly; made so (it would almost seem) by perverse intent rather than by accident, when we consider how pleasant and tempting to the inventive mind and the skilful hand are many of the processes of manufacture. Take for example the familiar art of glass-making. I have been in a glass-house, and seen the workmen in the process of their work bring the molten glass into the most elegant and delicious forms. There were points of the manufacture when, if the vessel they were making had been taken straight to the annealing house, the result would have been something which would have rivalled the choicest pieces of Venetian glass; but that could not be, they had to take their callipers and moulds and reduce the fantastic elegance of the living metal to the due marketable ugliness and vulgarity of some shape, designed most likely by a man who did not in the least know or care how glass was made; and the experience is common enough in other arts. I repeat that all manufactured goods are now divided into two classes; one class vulgar and ugly, though often pretentious enough, with work on it which it is a mockery to call ornamental, but which probably has some wretched remains of tradition still clinging to it; that is for poor people, for the uncultivated. The other class, made for some of the rich, intends to be beautiful, is carefully and elaborately designed, but usually fails of its intent partly because it is cast loose from tradition, partly because there is no co-operation in it between the designer and the handicraftsman. Thus is our wealth injured, our wealth, the means of living a decent life, and no one is the gainer; for while on the one hand the lower classes have no real art of any kind about their houses, and have instead to put up with shabby and ghastly pretences of it which quite destroy their capacity for appreciating real art when they come across it in museums and picture-galleries, so on the other hand, not all the superfluous money of the rich can

buy what they profess to want; the only real art they can have is that which is made by unassisted individual genius, the laborious and painful work of men of rare attainments and special culture, who, cumbered as they are by unromantic life and hideous surroundings, do in spite of all manage now and then to break through the hindrances and produce noble works of art, which only a very few people even pretend to understand or be moved by. This art rich people can buy and possess sometimes, but necessarily there is little enough of it; and if there were tenfold what there is, I repeat it would not move the people one jot, for they are deadened to all art by the hideousness and squalor that surround them. Nor can I honestly say that the lack is wholly on their side, for the great artists I have been speaking of are what they are in virtue of their being men of very peculiar and especial gifts, and are mostly steeped in thoughts of history, wrapped up in contemplation of the beauty of past times. If they were not so constituted, I say, they would not in the teeth of all the difficulties in their way be able to produce beauty at all. But note the result. Everyday life rejects and neglects them; they cannot choose but let it go its way, and wrap themselves up in dreams of Greece and Italy. The days of Pericles and the days of Dante are the days through which they move, and the England of our own day with its millions of eager struggling people neither helps nor is helped by them: yet it may be they bide their time of usefulness, and in days to come will not be forgotten. Let us hope so.

Art, Wealth, and Riches

That, I say, is the condition of art amongst us. Lest you doubt it, or think I exaggerate, let me ask you to note how it fares with that art which is above all others co-operative: the art of architecture, to wit. Now, none know better than I do what a vast amount of talent and knowledge there is amongst the first-rate designers of buildings nowadays; and here and there all about the country one sees the buildings they have planned, and is rejoiced by them. Yet little enough does that help us in these days when, if a man leaves England for a few years, he finds when he comes back half a county of

bricks and mortar added to London. Can the greatest optimists say that the style of building in that half county has improved meanwhile? Is it not true, on the contrary, that it goes on getting worse, if that be possible? the last house built being always the vulgarest and ugliest, till one is beginning now to think with regret of the days of Gower Street, and to look with some complacency on the queer little boxes of brown brick which stand with their trim gardens choked up amongst new squares and terraces in the suburbs of London? It is a matter of course that almost every new house shall be quite disgracefully and degradingly ugly, and if by chance we come across a new house that shows any signs of thoughtfulness in design and planning we are quite astonished, and want to know who built it, who owns it, who designed it, and all about it from beginning to end; whereas when architecture was alive every house built was more or less beautiful. The phrase which called the styles of the Middle Ages Ecclesiastical Architecture has been long set aside by increased knowledge, and we know now that in that time cottage and cathedral were built in the same style and had the same kind of ornaments about them; size and, in some cases, material were the only differences between the humble and the majestic building. And it will not be till this sort of beauty is beginning to be once more in our towns, that there will be a real school of architecture; till every little chandler's shop in our suburbs, every shed run up for mere convenience, is made without effort fit for its purpose and beautiful at one and the same time. Now just think what a contrast that makes with our present way of housing ourselves. It is not easy to imagine the beauty of a town all of whose houses are beautiful, at least unless you have seen (say) Rouen or Oxford thirty years ago. But what a strange state art must be in when we either won't or can't take any trouble to make our houses fit for reasonable human beings to live in! Cannot, I suppose: for once again, except in the rarest cases, rich men's houses are no better than common ones. Excuse an example of this, I beg you. I have lately

seen Bournemouth, the watering place south-west of the New Forest. It is a district (scarcely a town) of rich men's houses. There was every inducement there to make them decent, for the place, with its sandy hills and pine-trees, gave really a remarkable site. It would not have taken so very much to have made it romantic. Well, there stand these rich men's houses among the pine-trees and gardens, and not even the pine-trees and gardens can make them tolerable. They are (you must pardon me the word) simply blackguardly, and while I speak they are going on building them by the mile.

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And now why cannot we amend all this? Why cannot we have, for instance, simple and beautiful dwellings fit for cultivated, well-mannered men and women, and not for ignorant, purse-proud digesting-machines? You may say because we don't wish for them, and that is true enough; but that only removes the question a step further, and we must ask: why don't we care about art? Why has civilized society in all that relates to the beauty of man's handiwork degenerated from the time of the barbarous, superstitious, unpeaceful Middle Ages? That is indeed a serious question to ask, involving questions still more serious, and the mere mention of which you may resent if I should be forced to speak of them.

I said that the relics of past art which we are driven to study nowadays are of a work which was not merely better than what we do now, but differed in kind from it. Now this difference in kind explains our shortcomings so far, and leaves us only one more question to ask: How shall we remedy the fault? For the kind of the handiwork of former times down to at least the time of the Renaissance was intelligent work, whereas ours is unintelligent work, or the work of slaves; surely this is enough to account for the worsening of art, for it means the disappearance of popular art from civilization. Popular art, that is, the art which is made by the co-operation of many minds and hands varying in kind and degree of talent, but all doing their part in due subordina-

tion to a great whole, without any one losing his individuality—the loss of such an art is surely great, nay, inestimable. But hitherto I have only been speaking of the lack of popular art being a grievous loss as a part of wealth; I have been considering the loss of the thing itself, the loss of the humanizing influence which the daily sight of beautiful handiwork brings to bear upon people; but now, when we are considering the way in which that handiwork was done, and the way in which it is done, the matter becomes more serious still. For I say unhesitatingly that the intelligent work which produced real art was pleasant to do, was human work, not over burdensome or degrading; whereas the unintelligent work which produces sham art, is irksome to do, it is unhuman work, burdensome and degrading; so that it is but right and proper that it should turn out nothing but ugly things. And the immediate cause of this degrading labour which oppresses so large a part of our people is the system of the organization of labour, which is the chief instrument of the great power of modern Europe, competitive commerce. That system has quite changed the way of working in all matters that can be considered as art, and the change is a very much greater one than people know of or think of. In times past these handicrafts were done on a small, almost a domestic, scale by knots of workmen who mostly belonged to organized gilds, and were taught their work soundly, however limited their education was in other respects. There was little division of labour among them; the grades between master and man were not many; a man knew his work from end to end, and felt responsible for every stage of its progress. Such work was necessarily slow to do and expensive to buy; neither was it always finished to the nail; but it was always intelligent work; there was a man's mind in it always, and abundant tokens of human hopes and fears, the sum of which makes life for all of us.

Now think of any kind of manufacture which you are conversant with, and note how differently it is done nowadays; almost certainly the workmen are collected in huge factories,

in which labour is divided and subdivided, till a workman is perfectly helpless in his craft if he finds himself without those above to feed his work, and those below to be fed by it. There is a regular hierarchy of masters over him; foreman, manager, clerk, and capitalist, every one of whom is more important than he who does the work. Not only is he not asked to put his individuality into his share of the work, but he is not allowed to. He is but part of a machine, and has but one unvarying set of tasks to do; and when he has once learned these, the more regularly and with the less thought he does them, the more valuable he is. The work turned out by this system is speedily done, and cheap to buy. No wonder, considering the marvellous perfection of the organization of labour that turns it out, and the energy with which it is carried through. Also, it has a certain high finish, and what I should call shop-counter look, quite peculiar to the wares of this century; but it is of necessity utterly unintelligent, and has no sign of humanity on it; not even so much as to show weariness here and there, which would imply that one part of it was pleasanter to do than another. Whatever art or semblance of art is on it has been doled out with due commercial care, and applied by a machine, human or otherwise, with exactly the same amount of interest in the doing it as went to the non-artistic parts of the work. Again I say that if such work were otherwise than ugly and despicable to look at one's sense of justice would be shocked; for the labour which went to the making of it was thankless and unpleasurable, little more than a mere oppression on the workman.

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Must this sort of work last for ever? As long as it lasts the mass of the people can have no share in art; the only handicraftsmen who are free are the artists, as we call them to-day, and even they are hindered and oppressed by the oppression of their fellows. Yet I know that this machine-organized labour is necessary to competitive commerce; that is to say, to the present constitution of society; and probably most of you think that speculation on a root and

branch change in that is mere idle dreaming. I cannot help it; I can only say that that change must come, or at least be on the way, before art can be made to touch the mass of the people. To some that may seem an unimportant matter. One must charitably hope that such people are blind on the side of art, which I imagine is by no means an uncommon thing; and that blindness will entirely prevent them from understanding what I have been saying as to the pleasure which a good workman takes in his handiwork. But all those who know what art means will agree with me in asserting that pleasure is a necessary companion to the making of everything that can be called a work of art. To those, then, I appeal and ask them to consider if it is fair and just that only a few among the millions of civilization shall be partakers in a pleasure which is the surest and most constant of all pleasures, the unfailing solace of misfortune, happy and honourable work. Let us face the truth, and admit that a society which allows little other human and undegrading pleasure to the greater part of its toilers save the pleasure that comes of rest after the torment of weary work—that such a society should not be stable if it is; that it is but natural that such a society should be honeycombed with corruption and sick with oft-repeated sordid crimes.

Anyhow, dream or not as we may about the chances of a better kind of life which shall include a fair share of art for most people, it is no dream, but a certainty, that change is going on around us, though whitherward the change is leading us may be a matter of dispute. Most people though, I suppose, will be inclined to think that everything tends to favour the fullest development of competitive commerce and the utmost perfection of the system of labour which it depends upon. I think that is likely enough, and that things will go on quicker and quicker till the last perfection of blind commercial war has been reached; and then? May the change come with as little violence and suffering as may be!

It is the business of all of us to do our best to that end of preparing for change, and so softening the shock of it; to

leave as little as possible that must be destroyed to be destroyed suddenly and by violence of some sort or other. And in no direction, it seems to me, can we do more useful work in forestalling destructive revolution than in being beforehand with it in trying to fill up the gap that separates class from class. Here is a point surely where competitive commerce has disappointed our hopes; she has been ready enough to attack the privilege of feudality, and successful enough in doing it, but in levelling the distinctions between upper and middle classes, between gentleman and commoner, she has stopped as if enough had been done: for, alas, most men will be glad enough to level down to themselves, and then hold their hands obstinately enough. But note what stopping short here will do for us. It seems to me more than doubtful, if we go no further, whether we had better have gone as far; for the feudal and hierarchical system under which the old gild brethren whose work I have been praising lived, and which undoubtedly had something to do with the intelligence and single-heartedness of their work: this system, while it divided men rigorously into castes, did not actually busy itself to degrade them by forcing on them violent contrasts of cultivation and ignorance. The difference between lord and commoner, noble and burgher, was purely arbitrary; but how does it fare now with the distinction between class and class? Is it not the sad fact that the difference is no longer arbitrary but real? Down to a certain class, that of the educated gentleman, as he is called, there is indeed equality of manners and bearing, and if the commoners still choose to humble themselves and play the flunkey, that is their own affair; but below that class there is, as it were, the stroke of a knife, and gentlemen and non-gentlemen divide the world.

Just think of the significance of one fact; that here in England in the nineteenth century, among all the shouts of progress that have been raised for many years, the greater number of people are doomed by the accident of their birth to misplace their aitches; that there are two languages talked

in England: gentleman's English and workman's English. I do not care who gainsays it, I say that this is barbarous and dangerous; and it goes step by step with the lack of art which the same classes are forced into; it is a token, in short, of that vulgarity, to use a hateful word, which was not in existence before modern times and the blossoming of competitive commerce.

Nor, on the other hand, does modern class-division really fall much short of the caste system of the Middle Ages. It is pretty much as exclusive as that was. Excuse an example: I was talking with a lady friend of mine the other day who was puzzled as to what to do with her growing son, and we discussed the possibility of his taking to one of the crafts, trades as we call them now: say cabinetmaking. Now neither of us was much cumbered with social prejudices, both of us had a wholesome horror of increasing the army of London clerks, yet we were obliged to admit that unless a lad were of strong character and could take the step with his own eyes open and face the consequences on his own account, the thing could not be done; it would be making him either a sort of sloppy amateur or an involuntary martyr to principle. Well really after that we do not seem to have quite cast off even the mere mediæval superstition founded, I take it, on the exclusiveness of Roman landlordism (for our Gothic forefathers were quite free from the twaddle), that handiwork is a degrading occupation. At first sight the thing seems so monstrous that one almost expects to wake up from a confused dream and find oneself in the reign of Henry the Eighth, with the whole paraphernalia in full blossom, from the divine right of kings downwards. Why in the name of patience should a carpenter be a worse gentleman than a lawyer? His craft is a much more useful one, much harder to learn, and at the very worst, even in these days, much pleasanter; and yet, you see, we gentlemen and ladies durst not set our sons to it unless we have found them to be enthusiasts or philosophers who can accept all consequences

and despise the opinion of the world; in which case they will lie under the ban of that terrible adjective, eccentric. Art, Wealth, and Riches

Well, I have thought we might deduce part of this folly from a superstition of past ages, that it was partly a remnant of the accursed tyranny of ancient Rome; but there is another side to the question which puts a somewhat different face upon it. I bethink me that amongst other things the lady said to me: "You know, I wouldn't mind a lad being a cabinetmaker if he only made 'Art' furniture." Well, there you see! she naturally, as a matter of course, admitted what I have told you this evening is a fact, that even in a craft so intimately connected with fine art as cabinetmaking there could be two classes of goods, one the common one, quite without art; the other exceptional and having a sort of artificial art, so to say, tacked on to it. But furthermore, the thought that was in her mind went tolerably deep into the matter, and cleaves close to our subject; for in fact these crafts are so mechanical as they are now carried on, that they don't exercise the intellectual part of a man; no, scarcely at all; and perhaps after all, in these days, when privilege is on its deathbed, that has something to do with the low estimate that is made of them. You see, supposing a young man to enter the cabinetmaker's craft, for instance (one of the least mechanical, even at present): when he had attained to more than average skill in it, his next ambition would be to better himself, as the phrase goes; that is, either to take to some other occupation thought more gentlemanly, or to become, not a master cabinetmaker, but a capitalist employer of cabinetmakers. Thus the crafts lose their best men because they have not in themselves due reward for excellence. Beyond a certain point you cannot go, and that point is not set high enough. Understand, by reward I don't mean only money wages, but social position, leisure, and above all, the self-respect which comes of our having the opportunity of doing remarkable and individual work, useful for one's fellows to possess, and pleasant for oneself to do; work which at least

deserves thanks, whether it gets them or not. Now, mind you, I know well enough that it is the custom of people when they speak in public to talk largely of the dignity of labour and the esteem in which they hold the working classes, and I suppose while they are speaking they believe what they say; but will their respect for the dignity of labour bear the test I have been speaking of? to wit, will they, can they, being of the upper or middle classes, put their sons to this kind of labour? Do they think that, so doing, they will give their children a good prospect in life? It does not take long to answer that question, and I repeat that I consider it a test question; therefore I say that the crafts are distinctly marked as forming part of a lower class, and that this stupidity is partly the remnant of the prejudices of the hierarchical society of the Middle Ages, but also is partly the result of the reckless pursuit of riches, which is the main aim of competitive commerce. Moreover, this is the worst part of the folly, for the mere superstition would of itself wear away, and not very slowly either, before political and social progress; but the side of it which is fostered by competitive commerce is more enduring, for there is reality about it. The crafts really are degraded, and the classes that form them are only kept sweet by the good blood and innate good sense of the workmen as men out of their working hours, and by their strong political tendencies, which are wittingly or unwittingly at war with competitive commerce, and may, I hope, be trusted slowly to overthrow it. Meanwhile, I believe this degradation of craftsmanship to be necessary to the perfection and progress of competitive commerce: the degradation of craftsmanship, or, in other words, the extinction of art. That is such a heavy accusation to bring against the system, that, crazy as you may think me, I am bound to declare myself in open rebellion against it: against, I admit it, the mightiest power which the world has ever seen. Mighty, indeed, yet mainly to destroy, and therefore I believe short-lived; since all things which are destructive bear their own destruction with them.

And now I want to get back before I finish to my first three words, Art, Wealth, and Riches. I can conceive that many people would be like to say to me: You declare yourself in rebellion against the system which creates wealth for the world. It is just that which I deny; it is the destruction of wealth of which I accuse competitive commerce. I say that wealth, or the material means for living a decent life, is created in spite of that system, not because of it. To my mind real wealth is of two kinds; the first kind, food, raiment, shelter, and the like; the second, matters of art and knowledge; that is, things good and necessary for the body, and things good and necessary for the mind. Many other things than these is competitive commerce busy about, some of them directly injurious to the life of man, some merely encumbrances to its honourable progress; meanwhile the first of these two kinds of real wealth she largely wastes, the second she largely destroys. She wastes the first by unjust and ill-managed distribution of the power of acquiring wealth, which we call shortly money; by urging people to the reckless multiplication of their kind, and by gathering population into unmanageable aggregations to satisfy her ruthless greed, without the least thought of their welfare.

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As for the second kind of wealth, mental wealth, in many ways she destroys it; but the two ways which most concern our subject to-night are these: first, the reckless destruction of the natural beauty of the earth, which compels the great mass of the population, in this country at least, to live amidst ugliness and squalor so revolting and disgusting that we could not bear it unless habit had made us used to it; that is to say, unless we were far advanced on the road towards losing some of the highest and happiest qualities which have been given to men. But the second way by which competitive commerce destroys our mental wealth is yet worse: it is by the turning of almost all handicraftsmen into machines; that is to say, compelling them to work which is unintelligent and unhuman, a mere weariness to be borne for the greater part of the day; thus robbing men of the gain and victory

which long ages of toil and thought have won from stern hard nature and necessity, man's pleasure and triumph in his daily work.

I tell you it is not wealth which our civilization has created, but riches, with its necessary companion poverty; for riches cannot exist without poverty, or in other words slavery. All rich men must have some one to do their dirty work, from the collecting of their unjust rents to the sifting of their ash heaps. Under the dominion of riches we are masters and slaves instead of fellow-workmen as we should be. If competitive commerce creates wealth, then should England surely be the wealthiest country in the world, as I suppose some people think it is, and as it is certainly the richest; but what shabbiness is this rich country driven into? I belong, for instance, to a harmless little society whose object is to preserve for the public now living and to come the wealth which England still possesses in historical and beautiful buildings; and I could give you a long and dismal list of buildings which England, with all her riches, has not been able to save from commercial greed in some form or another. "It's a matter of money" is supposed to be an unanswerable argument in these cases, and indeed we generally find that if we answer it our answer is cast on the winds. Why, to this day in England (in England only, I believe, amongst civilized countries) there is no law to prevent a madman or an ignoramus from pulling down a house which he chooses to call his private property, though it may be one of the treasures of the land for art and history.

Or again, of how many acres of common land has riches robbed the country, even in this century? a treasure irreplaceable, inestimable, in these days of teeming population. Yet where is the man who dares to propose a measure for the reinstatement of the public in its rights in this matter? How often, once more, have railway companies been allowed for the benefit of the few to rob the public of treasures of beauty that can never be replaced, owing to the cowardly and anarchical maxims which seem always to be favoured by

those who should be our guardians herein; but riches has no bowels except for riches. Or you of this part of the country, what have you done with Lancashire? It does not seem to be above ground. I think you must have been poor indeed to have been compelled to bury it. Were not the brown moors and the meadows, the clear streams and the sunny skies, wealth? Riches has made a strange home for you. Some of you, indeed, can sneak away from it sometimes to Wales, to Scotland, to Italy; some, but very few. I am sorry for you; and for myself too, for that matter, for down by the Thames-side there we are getting rid of the earth as fast as we can also; most of Middlesex, most of Surrey, and huge cantles of Essex and Kent are buried mountains deep under fantastic folly or hideous squalor; and no one has the courage to say: "Let us seek a remedy while any of our wealth in this kind is left us." Art, Wealth, and Riches

Or, lastly, if all these things may seem light matters to some of you, grievously heavy as they really are, no one can think lightly of those terrible stories we have been hearing lately of the housing of poor people in London; indeed and indeed no country which can bear to sit quiet under such grievances has any right to be called wealthy. Yet you know very well that it will be long indeed before any party or any Government will have the courage to face the subject, dangerous as they must needs know it is to shut their eyes to it.

And what is to amend these grievances? You must not press me too close on that point. I believe I am in such a very small minority on these matters that it is enough for me if I find here and there some one who admits the grievances; for my business herein is to spread discontent. I do not think that this is an unimportant office; for, as discontent spreads, the yearning for bettering the state of things spreads with it, and the longing of many people, when it has grown deep and strong, melts away resistance to change in a sure, steady, unaccountable manner. Yet I will, with your leave, tell the chief things which I really want to see changed, in case I have not spoken plainly enough hitherto, and lest

I should seem to have nothing to bid you to but destruction, the destruction of a system by some thought to have been made to last for ever. I want, then, all persons to be educated according to their capacity, not according to the amount of money which their parents happen to have. I want all persons to have manners and breeding according to their innate goodness and kindness, and not according to the amount of money which their parents happen to have. As a consequence of these two things I want to be able to talk to any of my countrymen in his own tongue freely, and feeling sure that he will be able to understand my thoughts according to his innate capacity; and I also want to be able to sit at table with a person of any occupation without a feeling of awkwardness and constraint being present between us. I want no one to have any money except as due wages for work done; and, since I feel sure that those who do the most useful work will neither ask nor get the highest wages, I believe that this change will destroy that worship of a man for the sake of his money, which everybody admits is degrading, but which very few indeed can help sharing in. I want those who do the rough work of the world, sailors, miners, ploughmen, and the like, to be treated with consideration and respect, to be paid abundant money-wages, and to have plenty of leisure. I want modern science, which I believe to be capable of overcoming all material difficulties, to turn from such preposterous follies as the invention of anthracine colours and monster cannon to the invention of machines for performing such labour as is revolting and destructive of self-respect to the men who now have to do it by hand. I want handicraftsmen proper, that is, those who make wares, to be in such a position that they may be able to refuse to make foolish and useless wares, or to make the cheap and nasty wares which are the mainstay of competitive commerce, and are indeed slave-wares, made by and for slaves. And in order that the workmen may be in this position, I want division of labour restricted within reasonable limits, and men taught to think over their work and take pleasure

in it. I also want the wasteful system of middlemen restricted, so that workmen may be brought into contact with the public, who will thus learn something about their work, and so be able to give them due reward of praise for excellence. Art, Wealth, and Riches

Furthermore, I want the workmen to share the good fortunes of the business which they uphold, in due proportion to their skill and industry, as they must in any case share its bad fortunes. To which end it would be necessary that those who organize their labour should be paid no more than due wages for their work, and should be chosen for their skill and intelligence, and not because they happen to be the sons of money-bags. Also I want this, and, if men were living under the conditions I have just claimed for them, I should get it, that these islands which make the land we love should no longer be treated as here a cinder-heap, and there a game preserve, but as the fair green garden of Northern Europe, which no man on any pretence should be allowed to befoul or disfigure. Under all these conditions I should certainly get the last want accomplished which I am now going to name. I want all the works of man's hand to be beautiful, rising in fair and honourable gradation from the simplest household goods to the stately public building, adorned with the handiwork of the greatest masters of expression which that real new birth and the dayspring of hope come back will bring forth for us.

These are the foundations of my Utopia, a city in which riches and poverty will have been conquered by wealth; and however crazy you may think my aspirations for it, one thing at least I am sure of, that henceforward it will be no use looking for popular art except in such an Utopia, or at least on the road thither; a road which, in my belief, leads to peace and civilization, as the road away from it leads to discontent, corruption, tyranny, and confusion. Yet it may be we are more nearly on the road to it than many people think; and however that may be, I am cheered somewhat by thinking that the very small minority to which I belong is being

helped by every one who is of goodwill in social matters. Every one who is pushing forward education helps us; for education, which seems such a small power to classes which have been used to some share of it for generations, when it reaches those who have grievances which they ought not to bear spreads deep discontent among them, and teaches them what to do to make their discontent fruitful. Every one who is striving to extinguish poverty is helping us; for one of the greatest causes of the dearth of popular art and the oppression of joyless labour is the necessity that is imposed on modern civilization for making miserable wares for miserable people, for the slaves of competitive commerce. All who assert public rights against private greed are helping us; every foil given to common-stealers, or railway-Philistines, or smoke-nuisance-breeders, is a victory scored to us. Every one who tries to keep alive traditions of art by gathering together relics of the art of bygone times, still more if he is so lucky as to be able to lead people by his own works to look through Manchester smoke and squalor to fair scenes of unspoiled nature or deeds of past history, is helping us. Every one who tries to bridge the gap between the classes, by helping the opening of museums and galleries and gardens and other pleasures which can be shared by all, is helping us. Every one who tries to stir up intelligence in their work in workmen, and more especially every one who gives them hope in their work and a sense of self-respect and responsibility to the public in it, by such means as industrial partnerships and the like, is helping the cause most thoroughly.

These, and such as these, are our helpers, and give us a kind of hope that the time may come when our views and aspirations will no longer be considered rebellious, and when competitive commerce will be lying in the same grave with chattel slavery, with serfdom, and with feudalism. Or rather, certainly the change will come, however long we shall have been dead by then; how, then, can we prevent its coming with violence and injustice that will breed other

grievances in time, to be met by fresh discontent? Once again, how good it were to destroy all that must be destroyed gradually and with a good grace! Art, Wealth, and Riches

Here in England, we have a fair house full of many good things, but cumbered also with pestilential rubbish. What duty can be more pressing than to carry out the rubbish piecemeal and burn it outside, lest some day there be no way of getting rid of it but by burning it up inside with the goods and house and all?

ART UNDER PLUTOCRACY. A LECTURE DELIVERED AT UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, OXFORD, 14TH NOVEMBER 1883. JOHN RUSKIN IN THE CHAIR.

YOU may well think I am not here to criticize any special school of art or artists, or to plead for any special style, or to give you any instructions, however general, as to the practice of the arts. Rather I want to take counsel with you as to what hindrances may lie in the way towards making art what it should be, a help and solace to the daily life of all men. Some of you here may think that the hindrances in the way are none, or few, and easy to be swept aside. You will say that there is on many sides much knowledge of the history of art, and plenty of taste for it, at least among the cultivated classes; that many men of talent, and some few of genius, practise it with no mean success; that within the last fifty years there has been something almost like a fresh renaissance of art, even in directions where such a change was least to be hoped for. All this is true as far as it goes; and I can well understand this state of things being a cause of gratulation amongst those who do not know what the scope of art really is, and how closely it is bound up with the general condition of society, and especially with the lives of those who live by manual labour and whom we call the working classes. For my part, I cannot help noting that under the apparent satisfaction with the progress of art of late years there lies in the minds of most thinking people a feeling of mere despair as to the prospects of art in the future; a despair which seems to me fully justified if we look at the present condition of art without considering the causes which have led to it, or the hopes which may exist for a change in those causes. For, without beating about the bush, let us consider what the real state of art is. And first I must ask you to extend the word art beyond those matters which are consciously works of art, to take in not only painting and sculpture, and archi-

tecture, but the shapes and colours of all household goods, nay, even the arrangement of the fields for tillage and pasture, the management of towns and of our highways of all kinds; in a word, to extend it to the aspect of all the externals of our life. For I must ask you to believe that every one of the things that goes to make up the surroundings among which we live must be either beautiful or ugly, either elevating or degrading to us, either a torment and burden to the maker of it to make, or a pleasure and a solace to him. How does it fare therefore with our external surroundings in these days? What kind of an account shall we be able to give to those who come after us of our dealings with the earth, which our forefathers handed down to us still beautiful, in spite of all the thousands of years of strife and carelessness and selfishness?

Art under Plutocracy

Surely this is no light question to ask ourselves; nor am I afraid that you will think it a mere rhetorical flourish if I say that it is a question that may well seem a solemn one when it is asked here in Oxford, amidst sights and memories which we older men at least regard with nothing short of love. He must be indeed a man of narrow incomplete mind who, amidst the buildings raised by the hopes of our forefathers, amidst the country which they made so lovely, would venture to say that the beauty of the earth was a matter of little moment. And yet, I say, how have we of these latter days treated the beauty of the earth, or that which we call art?

Perhaps I had best begin by stating what will scarcely be new to you, that art must be broadly divided into two kinds, of which we may call the first Intellectual, and the second Decorative Art, using the words as mere forms of convenience. The first kind addresses itself wholly to our mental needs; the things made by it serve no other purpose but to feed the mind, and, as far as material needs go, might be done without altogether. The second, though so much of it as is art does also appeal to the mind, is always but a part of things which are intended primarily for the service

of the body. I must further say that there have been nations and periods which lacked the purely Intellectual art but positively none which lacked the Decorative (or at least some pretence of it); and furthermore, that in all times when the arts were in a healthy condition there was an intimate connexion between the two kinds of art; a connexion so close, that in the times when art flourished most, the higher and lower kinds were divided by no hard and fast lines. The highest intellectual art was meant to please the eye, as the phrase goes, as well as to excite the emotions and train the intellect. It appealed to all men, and to all the faculties of a man. On the other hand, the humblest of the ornamental art shared in the meaning and emotion of the intellectual; one melted into the other by scarce perceptible gradations; in short, the best artist was a workman still, the humblest workman was an artist. This is not the case now, nor has been for two or three centuries in civilized countries. Intellectual art is separated from Decorative by the sharpest lines of demarcation, not only as to the kind of work produced under those names, but even in the social position of the producers; those who follow the Intellectual arts being all professional men or gentlemen by virtue of their calling, while those who follow the Decorative are workmen earning weekly wages, non-gentlemen in short.

Now, as I have already said, many men of talent and some few of genius are engaged at present in producing works of Intellectual art, paintings and sculpture chiefly. It is nowise my business here or elsewhere to criticize their works; but my subject compels me to say that those who follow the Intellectual arts must be divided into two sections, the first composed of men who would in any age of the world have held a high place in their craft; the second of men who hold their position of gentleman-artist either by the accident of their birth, or by their possessing industry, business habits, or such-like qualities, out of all proportion to their artistic gifts. The work which these latter produce seems to me of little value to the world, though there is a thriving market

for it, and their position is neither dignified nor wholesome; yet they are mostly not to be blamed for it personally, since often they have gifts for art, though not great ones, and would probably not have succeeded in any other career. They are, in fact, good decorative workmen spoiled by a system which compels them to ambitious individualist effort, by cutting off from them any opportunity for co-operation with others of greater or less capacity for the production of popular art.

Art under Plutocracy

As to the first section of artists, who worthily fill their places and make the world wealthier by their work, it must be said of them that they are very few. These men have won their mastery over their craft by dint of incredible toil, pains, and anxiety, by qualities of mind and strength of will which are bound to produce something of value. Nevertheless they are injured also by the system which insists on individualism and forbids co-operation. For first, they are cut off from tradition, that wonderful, almost miraculous accumulation of the skill of ages, which men find themselves partakers in without effort on their part. The knowledge of the past and the sympathy with it which the artists of to-day have, they have acquired, on the contrary, by their own most strenuous individual effort; and as that tradition no longer exists to help them in their practice of the art, and they are heavily weighted in the race by having to learn everything from the beginning, each man for himself, so also, and that is worse, the lack of it deprives them of a sympathetic and appreciative audience. Apart from the artists themselves and a few persons who would be also artists but for want of opportunity and for insufficient gifts of hand and eye, there is in the public of to-day no real knowledge of art, and little love for it. Nothing, save at the best certain vague prepossessions, which are but the phantom of that tradition which once bound artist and public together. Therefore the artists are obliged to express themselves, as it were, in a language not understanded of the people. Nor is this their fault. If they were to try, as some think they should, to meet the

public half-way and work in such a manner as to satisfy at any cost those vague prepossessions of men ignorant of art, they would be casting aside their special gifts, they would be traitors to the cause of art, which it is their duty and glory to serve. They have no choice save to do their own personal individual work unhelped by the present, stimulated by the past, but shamed by it, and even in a way hampered by it; they must stand apart as possessors of some sacred mystery which, whatever happens, they must at least do their best to guard. It is not to be doubted that both their own lives and their works are injured by this isolation. But the loss of the people; how are we to measure that? That they should have great men living and working amongst them, and be ignorant of the very existence of their work, and incapable of knowing what it means if they could see it!

In the times when art was abundant and healthy, all men were more or less artists; that is to say, the instinct for beauty which is inborn in every complete man had such force that the whole body of craftsmen habitually and without conscious effort made beautiful things, and the audience for the authors of intellectual art was nothing short of the whole people. And so they had each an assured hope of gaining that genuine praise and sympathy which all men who exercise their imagination in expression most certainly and naturally crave, and the lack of which does certainly injure them in some way; makes them shy, over-sensitive, and narrow, or else cynical and mocking, and in that case well-nigh useless. But in these days, I have said and repeat, the whole people is careless and ignorant of art; the inborn instinct for beauty is checked and thwarted at every turn; and the result on the less intellectual or decorative art is that as a spontaneous and popular expression of the instinct for beauty it dost not exist at all. It is a matter of course that everything made by man's hand is now obviously ugly, unless it is made beautiful by conscious effort; nor does it mend the matter that men have not lost the habit deduced from the times of art, of professing to ornament household

goods and the like; for this sham ornament, which has no least intention of giving any one pleasure, is so base and foolish that the words upholstery and upholsterer have come to have a kind of secondary meaning indicative of the profound contempt which all sensible men have for such twaddle. Art under Plutocracy

This, so far, is what decorative art has come to, and I must break off a while here and ask you to consider what it once was, lest you think over hastily that its degradation is a matter of little moment. Think, I beg you, to go no further back in history, of the stately and careful beauty of S. Sophia at Constantinople, of the golden twilight of S. Mark's at Venice; of the sculptured cliffs of the great French cathedrals, of the quaint and familiar beauty of our own minsters; nay, go through Oxford streets and ponder on what is left us there unscathed by the fury of the thriving shop and the progressive college; or wander some day through some of the out-of-the-way villages and little towns that lie scattered about the country-side within twenty miles of Oxford; and you will surely see that the loss of decorative art is a grievous loss to the world.

Thus then in considering the state of art among us I have been driven to the conclusion that in its co-operative form it is extinct, and only exists in the conscious efforts of men of genius and talent, who themselves are injured, and thwarted, and deprived of due sympathy by the lack of co-operative art.

But furthermore, the repression of the instinct for beauty which has destroyed the Decorative and injured the Intellectual arts has not stopped there in the injury it has done us. I can myself sympathize with a feeling which I suppose is still not rare, a craving to escape sometimes to mere Nature, not only from ugliness and squalor, not only from a condition of superabundance of art, but even from a condition of art severe and well ordered, even, say, from such surroundings as the lovely simplicity of Periclean Athens. I can deeply sympathize with a weary man finding his account in

interest in mere life and communion with external nature, the face of the country, the wind and weather, and the course of the day, and the lives of animals, wild and domestic; and man's daily dealings with all this for his daily bread, and rest, and innocent beast-like pleasure. But the interest in the mere animal life of man has become impossible to be indulged in in its fulness by most civilized people. Yet civilization, it seems to me, owes us some compensation for the loss of this romance, which now only hangs like a dream about the country life of busy lands. To keep the air pure and the rivers clean, to take some pains to keep the meadows and tillage as pleasant as reasonable use will allow them to be; to allow peaceable citizens freedom to wander where they will, so they do no hurt to garden or cornfield; nay, even to leave here and there some piece of waste or mountain sacredly free from fence or tillage as a memory of man's ruder struggles with nature in his earlier days: is it too much to ask civilization to be so far thoughtful of man's pleasure and rest, and to help so far as this her children to whom she has most often set such heavy tasks of grinding labour? Surely not an unreasonable asking. But not a whit of it shall we get under the present system of society. That loss of the instinct for beauty which has involved us in the loss of popular art is also busy in depriving us of the only compensation possible for that loss, by surely and not slowly destroying the beauty of the very face of the earth. Not only are London and our other great commercial cities mere masses of sordidness, filth, and squalor, embroidered with patches of pompous and vulgar hideousness, no less revolting to the eye and the mind when one knows what it means: not only have whole counties of England, and the heavens that hang over them, disappeared beneath a crust of unutterable grime, but the disease, which, to a visitor coming from the times of art, reason, and order, would seem to be a love of dirt and ugliness for its own sake, spreads all over the country, and every little market-town seizes the opportunity to imitate, as far as it can, the majesty of the hell of London and Manchester.

Need I speak to you of the wretched suburbs that sprawl all round our fairest and most ancient cities? Must I speak to you of the degradation that has so speedily befallen this city, still the most beautiful of them all; a city which, with its surroundings, would, if we had had a grain of common sense, have been treated like a most precious jewel, whose beauty was to be preserved at any cost? I say at any cost, for it was a possession which did not belong to us, but which we were trustees of for all posterity. I am old enough to know how we have treated that jewel; as if it were any common stone kicking about on the highway, good enough to throw at a dog. When I remember the contrast between the Oxford of to-day and the Oxford which I first saw thirty years ago, I wonder I can face the misery (there is no other word for it) of visiting it, even to have the honour of addressing you to-night. But furthermore, not only are the cities a disgrace to us, and the smaller towns a laughing-stock; not only are the dwellings of man grown inexpressibly base and ugly, but the very cowsheds and cart-stables, nay, the merest piece of necessary farm-engineering, are tarred with the same brush. Even if a tree is cut down or blown down, a worse one, if any, is planted in its stead, and, in short, our civilization is passing like a blight, daily growing heavier and more poisonous, over the whole face of the country, so that every change is sure to be a change for the worse in its outward aspect. So then it comes to this, that not only are the minds of great artists narrowed and their sympathies frozen by their isolation, not only has co-operative art come to a standstill, but the very food on which both the greater and the lesser art subsists is being destroyed; the well of art is poisoned at its spring.

Art under Plutocracy

Now I do not wonder that those who think that these evils are from henceforth for ever necessary to the progress of civilization should try to make the best of things, should shut their eyes to all they can, and praise the galvanized life of the art of the present day; but, for my part, I believe that they are not necessary to civilization, but only accompani-

ments to one phase of it, which will change and pass into something else, like all prior phases have done. I believe also that the essential characteristic of the present state of society is that which has so ruined art, or the pleasure of life; and that this having died out, the inborn love of man for beauty and the desire for expressing it will no longer be repressed, and art will be free. At the same time I not only admit, but declare, and think it most important to declare, that so long as the system of competition in the production and exchange of the means of life goes on, the degradation of the arts will go on; and if that system is to last for ever, then art is doomed, and will surely die; that is to say, civilization will die. I know it is at present the received opinion that the competitive or "Devil take the hindmost" system is the last system of economy which the world will see; that it is perfection, and therefore finality has been reached in it; and it is doubtless a bold thing to fly in the face of this opinion, which I am told is held even by the most learned men. But though I am not learned, I have been taught that the patriarchal system died out into that of the citizen and chattel slave, which in its turn gave place to that of the feudal lord and the serf, which, passing through a modified form, in which the burgher, the gild-craftsman and his journeyman played their parts, was supplanted by the system of so-called free contract now existing. That all things since the beginning of the world have been tending to the development of this system I willingly admit, since it exists; that all the events of history have taken place for the purpose of making it eternal, the very evolution of those events forbids me to believe.

For I am "one of the people called Socialists"; therefore I am certain that evolution in the economical conditions of life will go on, whatever shadowy barriers may be drawn across its path by men whose apparent self-interest binds them, consciously or unconsciously, to the present, and who are therefore hopeless for the future. I hold that the condition of competition between man and man is bestial only, and that of association human; I think that the change from the

undeveloped competition of the Middle Ages, trammelled as it was by the personal relations of feudality, and the attempts at association of the gild-craftsmen into the full-blown *laissez-faire* competition of the nineteenth century, is bringing to birth out of its own anarchy, and by the very means by which it seeks to perpetuate that anarchy, a spirit of association founded on that antagonism which has produced all former changes in the condition of men, and which will one day abolish all classes and take definite and practical form, and substitute association for competition in all that relates to the production and exchange of the means of life. I further believe that as that change will be beneficent in many ways, so especially will it give an opportunity for the new birth of art, which is now being crushed to death by the money-bags of competitive commerce.

Art under Plutocracy

My reason for this hope for art is founded on what I feel quite sure is a truth, and an important one, namely that all art, even the highest, is influenced by the conditions of labour of the mass of mankind, and that any pretensions which may be made for even the highest intellectual art to be independent of these general conditions are futile and vain; that is to say, that any art which professes to be founded on the special education or refinement of a limited body or class must of necessity be unreal and short-lived. ART IS MAN'S EXPRESSION OF HIS JOY IN LABOUR. If those are not Professor Ruskin's words they embody at least his teaching on this subject. Nor has any truth more important ever been stated; for if pleasure in labour be generally possible, what a strange folly it must be for men to consent to labour without pleasure; and what a hideous injustice it must be for society to compel most men to labour without pleasure! For since all men not dishonest must labour, it becomes a question either of forcing them to lead unhappy lives or allowing them to live unhappily. Now the chief accusation I have to bring against the modern state of society is that it is founded on the art-lacking or unhappy labour of the greater part of men; and all that external degradation of the face of the

country of which I have spoken is hateful to me not only because it is a cause of unhappiness to some few of us who still love art, but also and chiefly because it is a token of the unhappy life forced on the great mass of the population by the system of competitive commerce.

The pleasure which ought to go with the making of every piece of handicraft has for its basis the keen interest which every healthy man takes in healthy life, and is compounded, it seems to me, chiefly of three elements; variety, hope of creation, and the self-respect which comes of a sense of usefulness; to which must be added that mysterious bodily pleasure which goes with the deft exercise of the bodily powers. I do not think I need spend many words in trying to prove that these things, if they really and fully accompanied labour, would do much to make it pleasant. As to the pleasures of variety, any of you who have ever made anything, I don't care what, will well remember the pleasure that went with the turning out of the first specimen. What would have become of that pleasure if you had been compelled to go on making it exactly the same for ever? As to the hope of creation, the hope of producing some worthy or even excellent work which without you, the craftsman, would not have existed at all, a thing which needs you and can have no substitute for you in the making of it—can we any of us fail to understand the pleasure of this? No less easy, surely, is it to see how much the self-respect born of the consciousness of usefulness must sweeten labour. To feel that you have to do a thing not to satisfy the whim of a fool or a set of fools, but because it is really good in itself, that is useful, would surely be a good help to getting through the day's work. As to the unreasoning, sensuous pleasure in handiwork, I believe in good sooth that it has more power of getting rough and strenuous work out of men, even as things go, than most people imagine. At any rate it lies at the bottom of the production of all art, which cannot exist without it even in its feeblest and rudest form.

Now this compound pleasure in handiwork I claim as the

birthright of all workmen. I say that if they lack any part of it they will be so far degraded, but that if they lack it altogether they are, so far as their work goes, I will not say slaves, the word would not be strong enough, but machines more or less conscious of their own unhappiness. Art under Plutocracy

I have appealed already to history in aid of my hopes for a change in the system of the conditions of labour. I wish to bring forward now the witness of history that this claim of labour for pleasure rests on a foundation stronger than a mere fantastic dream; what is left of the art of all kinds produced in all periods and countries where hope of progress was alive before the development of the commercial system shows plainly enough to those who have eyes and understanding that pleasure did always in some degree accompany its production. This fact, however difficult it may be to demonstrate in a pedantic way, is abundantly admitted by those who have studied the arts widely; the very phrases so common in criticism that such and such a piece of would-be art is done mechanically, or done without feeling, express accurately enough the general sense of artists of a standard deduced from times of healthy art; for this mechanical and feelingless handiwork did not exist till days comparatively near our own, and it is the condition of labour under plutocratic rule which has allowed it any place at all.

The craftsman of the Middle Ages no doubt often suffered grievous material oppression, yet in spite of the rigid line of separation drawn by the hierarchical system under which he lived between him and his feudal superior, the difference between them was arbitrary rather than real; there was no such gulf in language, manners, and ideas as divides a cultivated middle-class person of to-day, a "gentleman," from even a respectable lower-class man; the mental qualities necessary to an artist, intelligence, fancy, imagination, had not then to go through the mill of the competitive market, nor had the rich (or successful competitors) made

good their claim to be the sole possessors of mental refinement.

As to the conditions of handiwork in those days, the crafts were drawn together into gilds which indeed divided the occupations of men rigidly enough, and guarded the door to those occupations jealously; but as outside among the gilds there was little competition in the markets, wares being made in the first instance for domestic consumption, and only the overplus of what was wanted at home close to the place of production ever coming into the market or requiring any one to come and go between the producer and consumer, so inside the gilds there was but little division of labour; a man or youth once accepted as an apprentice to a craft learned it from end to end, and became as a matter of course the master of it; and in the earlier days of the gilds, when the masters were scarcely even small capitalists, there was no grade in the craft save this temporary one. Later on, when the masters became capitalists in a sort, and the apprentices were, like the masters, privileged, the class of journeymen-craftsmen came into existence; but it does not seem that the difference between them and the aristocracy of the gild was anything more than an arbitrary one. In short, during all this period the unit of labour was an intelligent man. Under this system of handiwork no great pressure of speed was put on a man's work, but he was allowed to carry it through leisurely and thoughtfully; it used the whole of a man for the production of a piece of goods, and not small portions of many men; it developed the workman's whole intelligence according to his capacity, instead of concentrating his energy on one-sided dealing with a trifling piece of work; in short, it did not submit the hand and soul of the workman to the necessities of the competitive market, but allowed them freedom for due human development. It was this system, which had not learned the lesson that man was made for commerce, but supposed in its simplicity that commerce was made for man, which produced the art of the

Middle Ages, wherein the harmonious co-operation of free intelligence was carried to the furthest point which has yet been attained, and which alone of all art can claim to be called Free. The effect of this freedom, and the widespread or rather universal sense of beauty to which it gave birth, became obvious enough in the outburst of the expression of splendid and copious genius which marks the Italian Renaissance. Nor can it be doubted that this glorious art was the fruit of the five centuries of free popular art which preceded it, and not of the rise of commercialism which was contemporaneous with it; for the glory of the Renaissance faded out with strange rapidity as commercial competition developed, so that about the end of the seventeenth century, both in the intellectual and the decorative arts, the commonplace or body still existed, but the romance or soul of them was gone. Step by step they had faded and sickened before the advance of commercialism, now speedily gathering force throughout civilization. The domestic or architectural arts were becoming (or become) mere toys for the competitive market through which all material wares used by civilized men now had to pass. Commercialism had by this time well-nigh destroyed the craft-system of labour, in which, as aforesaid, the unit of labour is a fully instructed craftsman, and had supplanted it by what I will ask leave to call the workshop-system, wherein, when complete, division of labour in handiwork is carried to the highest point possible, and the unit of manufacture is no longer a man, but a group of men, each member of which is dependent on his fellows, and is utterly useless by himself. This system of the workshop division of labour was perfected during the eighteenth century by the efforts of the manufacturing classes, stimulated by the demands of the ever-widening markets; it is still the system in some of the smaller and more domestic kinds of manufacture, holding much the same place amongst us as the remains of the craft-system did in the days when that of the workshop was still young. Under this system, as I have said, all the romance of the arts died out, but the

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commonplace of them flourished still; for the idea that the essential aim of manufacture is the making of goods still struggled with a newer idea which has since obtained complete victory, namely, that it is carried on for the sake of making a profit for the manufacturer on the one hand, and on the other for the employment of the working classes.

This idea of commerce being an end in itself and not a means merely, being but half developed in the eighteenth century, the special period of the workshop-system, some interest could still be taken in those days in the making of wares. The capitalist-manufacturer of the period had some pride in turning out goods which would do him credit, as the phrase went; he was not willing wholly to sacrifice his pleasure in this kind to the imperious demands of commerce; even his workman, though no longer an artist, that is a free workman, was bound to have skill in his craft, limited though it was to the small fragment of it which he had to toil at day by day for his whole life.

But commerce went on growing, stimulated still more by the opening up of new markets, and pushed on the invention of men, till their ingenuity produced the machines which we have now got to look upon as necessities of manufacture, and which have brought about a system the very opposite to the ancient craft-system; that system was fixed and conservative of methods; there was no real difference in the method of making a piece of goods between the time of Pliny and the time of Sir Thomas More; the method of manufacture, on the contrary, in the present time, alters not merely from decade to decade, but from year to year; this fact has naturally helped the victory of this machine-system, the system of the Factory, where the machine-like workmen of the workshop period are supplanted by actual machines, of which the operatives (as they are now called) are but a portion, and a portion gradually diminishing both in importance and numbers. This system is still short of its full development, therefore to a certain extent the workshop-system is being carried on side by side with it, but it is being speedily

and steadily crushed out by it; and when the process is complete, the skilled workman will no longer exist, and his place will be filled by machines directed by a few highly trained and very intelligent experts, and tended by a multitude of people, men, women, and children, of whom neither skill nor intelligence is required. Art under Plutocracy

This system, I repeat, is as near as may be the opposite of that which produced the popular art which led up to that splendid outburst of art in the days of the Italian Renaissance which even cultivated men will sometimes deign to notice nowadays; it has therefore produced the opposite of what the old craft-system produced, the death of art and not its birth; in other words the degradation of the external surroundings of life, or simply and plainly unhappiness. Through all society spreads that curse of unhappiness: from the poor wretches, the news of whom we middle-class people are just now receiving with such naif wonder and horror: from those poor people whom nature forces to strive against hope, and to expend all the divine energy of man in competing for something less than a dog's lodging and a dog's food, from them up to the cultivated and refined person, well lodged, well fed, well clothed, expensively educated, but lacking all interest in life except, it may be, the cultivation of unhappiness as a fine art.

Something must be wrong then in art, or the happiness of life is sickening in the house of civilization. What has caused the sickness? Machine-labour will you say? Well, I have seen quoted a passage from one of the ancient Sicilian poets rejoicing in the fashioning of a water-mill, and exulting in labour being set free from the toil of the hand-quern in consequence; and that surely would be a type of a man's natural hope when foreseeing the invention of labour-saving machinery as 'tis called; natural surely, since though I have said that the labour of which art can form a part should be accompanied by pleasure, no one could deny that there is some necessary labour even which is not pleasant in itself, and plenty of unnecessary labour which is merely painful.

If machinery had been used for minimizing such labour, the utmost ingenuity would scarcely have been wasted on it; but is that the case in any way? Look round the world, and you must agree with John Stuart Mill in his doubt whether all the machinery of modern times has lightened the daily work of one labourer. And why have our natural hopes been so disappointed? Surely because in these latter days, in which as a matter of fact machinery has been invented, it was by no means invented with the aim of saving the pain of labour. The phrase labour-saving machinery is elliptical, and means machinery which saves the cost of labour, not the labour itself, which will be expended when saved on tending other machines. For a doctrine which, as I have said, began to be accepted under the workshop-system, is now universally received, even though we are yet short of the complete development of the system of the Factory. Briefly, the doctrine is this, that the essential aim of manufacture is making a profit; that it is frivolous to consider whether the wares when made will be of more or less use to the world so long as any one can be found to buy them at a price which, when the workman engaged in making them has received of necessaries and comforts as little as he can be got to take, will leave something over as a reward to the capitalist who has employed him. This doctrine of the sole aim of manufacture (or indeed of life) being the profit of the capitalist and the occupation of the workman, is held, I say, by almost every one; its corollary is, that labour is necessarily unlimited, and that to attempt to limit it is not so much foolish as wicked, whatever misery may be caused to the community by the manufacture and sale of the wares made.

It is this superstition of commerce being an end in itself, of man made for commerce, not commerce for man, of which art has sickened; not of the accidental appliances which that superstition when put in practice has brought to its aid; machines and railways and the like, which do now verily control us all, might have been controlled by us, if we had not been resolute to seek profit and occupation at the cost

of establishing for a time that corrupt and degrading anarchy which has usurped the name of Society. It is my business here to-night and everywhere to foster your discontent with that anarchy and its visible results; for indeed I think it would be an insult to you to suppose that you are contented with the state of things as they are; contented to see all beauty vanish from our beautiful city, for instance; contented with the squalor of the black country, with the hideousness of London, the wen of all wens, as Cobbett called it; contented with the ugliness and baseness which everywhere surround the life of civilized man; contented, lastly, to be living above that unutterable and sickening misery of which a few details are once again reaching us as if from some distant unhappy country, of which we could scarcely expect to hear, but which I tell you is the necessary foundation on which our society, our anarchy, rests.

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Neither can I doubt that every one here has formed some idea of remedies for these defects in our civilization, as we euphemistically call them, even though the ideas be vague; also I know that you are familiar with the precepts of the system of economy, that religion, I may say, which has supplanted the precepts of the old religions on the duty and blessing of giving to the needy; you understand of course that though a friend may give to a friend and both giver and receiver be better for the gift, yet a rich man cannot give to a poor one without both being the worse for it; I suppose because they are not friends. And amidst all this I feel sure, I say, that you all of you have some ideal of a state of things better than that amidst which we live, something, I mean to say, more than the application of temporary palliatives to the enduring defects of our civilization.

Now it seems to me that the ideal of better times which the more advanced in opinion of our own class have formed as possible and hopeful is something like this. There is to be a large class of industrious people not too much refined (or they could not do the rough work wanted of them), who are to live in comfort (not, however, meaning our middle-class

comfort), and receive a kind of education (if they can), and not be overworked; that is, not overworked for a working man; his light day's work would be rather heavy for the refined classes. This class is to be the basis of society, and its existence will leave the consciences of the refined class quite free and at rest. From this refined class will come the directors or captains of labour (in other words the usurers), the directors of people's consciences religious and literary (clergy, philosophers, newspaper-writers), and lastly, if that be thought of at all, the directors of art; these two classes with or without a third, the functions of which are indefinite, will live together with the greatest goodwill, the upper helping the lower without sense of condescension on one side or humiliation on the other; the lower are to be perfectly content with their position, and there is to be no grain of antagonism between the classes: although (even Utopianism of this kind being unable to shake off the idea of the necessity of competition between individuals) the lower class, blessed and respected as it is to be, will have moreover the additional blessing of hope held out to it; the hope of each man rising into the upper class, and leaving the chrysalis of labour behind him; nor, if that matters, is the lower class to lack due political or parliamentary power; all men (or nearly all) being equal before the ballot-box, except so far as they may be bought like other things. That seems to me to be the middle-class liberal ideal of reformed society; all the world turned bourgeois, big and little, peace under the rule of competitive commerce, ease of mind and a good conscience to all and several under the rule of the devil take the hindmost.

Well, for my part I have nothing, positively nothing, to say against it if it can be brought about. Religion, morality, art, literature, science, might for all I know flourish under it and make the world a heaven. But have we not tried it somewhat already? Are not many people jubilant whenever they stand on a public platform over the speedy advent of this good time? It seems to me that the continued and advancing

prosperity of the working classes is almost always noted when a political man addresses an audience on general subjects, when he forgets party politics; nor seldom when he remembers them most. Nor do I wish to take away honour where honour is due; I believe there are many people who deeply believe in the realization of this ideal, while they are not ignorant of how lamentably far things are from it at present; I know that there are men who sacrifice time, money, pleasure, their own prejudices even, to bring it about; men who hate strife and love peace, men hard working, kindly, unambitious. What have they done? How much nearer are they to the ideal of the bourgeois commonwealth than they were at the time of the Reform Bill, or the time of the repeal of the Corn Laws? Well, thus much nearer to a great change perhaps, that there is a chink in the armour of self-satisfaction; a suspicion that perhaps it is not the accidents of the system of competitive commerce which have to be abolished, but the system itself; but as to approaching the ideal of that system reformed into humanity and decency, they are about so much nearer to it as a man is nearer to the moon when he stands on a hayrick. I don't want to make too much of the matter of money-wages apart from the ghastly contrast between the rich and the poor which is the essence of our system; yet remember that poverty driven below a certain limit means degradation and slavery pure and simple. Now I have seen a statement made by one of the hopeful men of the rich middle class that the average yearly income of an English working man's household is one hundred pounds. I don't believe the figures because I am sure that they are swollen by wages paid in times of inflation, and ignore the precarious position of most working men; but quite apart from that, do not, I beg you, take refuge behind averages; for at least they are swelled by the high wages paid to special classes of workmen in special places, and in the manufacturing districts by the mothers of families working in factories, to my mind a most abominable custom, and by other matters of the like kind, which the average-makers leave you to find out for

yourselves. But even that is not the point of the matter. For my part the enormous average of one hundred pounds a year to so many millions of toiling people, while many thousands who do not toil think themselves poor with ten times the income, does not comfort me for the fact of a thousand strong men waiting at the dock gates down at Poplar the greater part of a working-day, on the chance of some of them being taken on at wretched wages, or for the ordinary wage of a farm labourer over a great part of England being ten shillings per week, and that considered ruinous by the farmers also: if averages will content us while such things as this go on, why stop at the working classes? Why not take in everybody, from the Duke of Westminster downwards, and then raise a hymn of rejoicing over the income of the English people?

I say let us be done with averages and look at lives and their sufferings, and try to realize them: for indeed what I want you to note is this; that though you may realize a part of the bourgeois or radical ideal, there is and for ever will be under the competitive system a skeleton in the cupboard. We may, nay, we have managed to create a great mass of middling well-to-do people, hovering on the verge of the middle classes, prosperous artisans, small tradesmen, and the like; and I must say parenthetically that in spite of all their innate good qualities the class does little credit to our civilization; for though they live in a kind of swinish comfort as far as food is concerned, they are ill housed, ill educated, crushed by grovelling superstitions, lacking reasonable pleasures, utterly devoid of any sense of beauty. But let that pass. For aught I know we may very much increase the proportionate numbers of this class without making any serious change in our system, but under all that still lies and will lie another class which we shall never get rid of as long as we are under the tyranny of the devil take the hindmost; that class is the Class of Victims. Now above all things I want us not to forget them (as indeed we are not likely to for some weeks to come), or to console ourselves by averages for the fact that the riches of the rich and the comfort of the well-to-do are

founded on that terrible mass of undignified, unrewarded, useless misery, concerning which we have of late been hearing a little, a very little; after all we do know that is a fact, and we can only console ourselves by hoping that we may, if we are watchful and diligent (which we very seldom are), we may greatly diminish the amount of it. I ask you, is such a hope as that worthy of our boasted civilization with its perfected creeds, its high morality, its sounding political maxims? Will you think it monstrous that some people have conceived another hope, and see before them the ideal of a society in which there should be no classes permanently degraded for the benefit of the commonweal? For one thing I would have you remember, that this lowest class of utter poverty lies like a gulf before the whole of the working classes, who in spite of all averages live a precarious life; the failure in the game of life which entails on a rich man an unambitious retirement, and on a well-to-do man a life of dependence and laborious shifts, drags a working man down into that hell of irredeemable degradation. I hope there are but few, at least here, who can comfort their consciences by saying that the working classes bring this degradation on themselves by their own unthrift and recklessness. Some do, no doubt, stoic philosophers of the higher type not being much commoner among day-labourers than among the well-to-do and rich; but we know very well how sorely the mass of the poor strive, practising such thrift as is in itself a degradation to man, in whose very nature it is to love mirth and pleasure, and how in spite of all that they fall into the gulf. What! are we going to deny that when we see all round us in our own class cases of men failing in life by no fault of their own; nay, many of the failers worthier and more useful than those that succeed: as might indeed be looked for in the state of war which we call the system of unlimited competition, where the best campaigning-luggage a man can carry is a hard heart and no scruples? For indeed the fulfilment of that liberal ideal of the reform of our present system into a state of moderate class supremacy is impossible, because that system is after all no-

thing but a continuous implacable war; the war once ended, commerce, as we now understand the word, comes to an end, and the mountains of wares which are either useless in themselves or only useful to slaves and slave-owners are no longer made, and once again art will be used to determine what things are useful and what useless to be made; since nothing should be made which does not give pleasure to the maker and the user, and that pleasure of making must produce art in the hands of the workman. So will art be used to discriminate between the waste and the usefulness of labour; whereas at present the waste of labour is, as I have said above, a matter never considered at all; so long as a man toils he is supposed to be useful, no matter what he toils at.

I tell you the very essence of competitive commerce is waste; the waste that comes of the anarchy of war. Do not be deceived by the outside appearance of order in our plutocratic society. It fares with it as it does with the older forms of war, that there is an outside look of quiet wonderful order about it; how neat and comforting the steady march of the regiment; how quiet and respectable the sergeants look; how clean the polished cannon; neat as a new pin are the storehouses of murder; the books of adjutant and sergeant as innocent-looking as may be; nay, the very orders for destruction and plunder are given with a quiet precision which seems the very token of a good conscience; this is the mask that lies before the ruined cornfield and the burning cottage, the mangled bodies, the untimely death of worthy men, the desolated home. All this, the results of the order and sobriety which is the face which civilized soldiering turns towards us stay-at-homes, we have been told often and eloquently enough to consider; often enough we have been shown the wrong side of the glories of war, nor can we be shown it too often or too eloquently. Yet I say even such a mask is worn by competitive commerce, with its respectable prim order, its talk of peace and the blessings of intercommunication of countries and the like; and all the while its whole energy, its whole organized precision is employed in

one thing, the wrenching the means of living from others; while outside that everything must do as it may, whoever is the worse or the better for it; as in the war of fire and steel, all other aims must be crushed out before that one object. It is worse than the older war in one respect at least, that whereas that was intermittent, this is continuous and unresting, and its leaders and captains are never tired of declaring that it must last as long as the world, and is the end-all and be-all of the creation of man and of his home. Of such the words are said:

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> For them alone do seethe
> A thousand men in troubles wide and dark;
> Half ignorant they turn an easy wheel
> That sets sharp racks at work to pinch and peel.

What can overthrow this terrible organization so strong in itself, so rooted in the self-interest, stupidity, and cowardice of strenuous narrow-minded men; so strong in itself and so much fortified against attack by the surrounding anarchy which it has bred? Nothing but discontent with that anarchy, and an order which in its turn will arise from it, nay, is arising from it; an order once a part of the internal organization of that which it is doomed to destroy. For the fuller development of industrialism from the ancient crafts through the workshop-system into the system of the factory and machine, while it has taken from the workmen all pleasure in their labour, or hope of distinction and excellence in it, has welded them into a great class, and has by its very oppression and compulsion of the monotony of life driven them into feeling the solidarity of their interests and the antagonism of those interests to those of the capitalist class; they are all through civilization feeling the necessity of their rising as a class. As I have said, it is impossible for them to coalesce with the middle classes to produce the universal reign of moderate bourgeois society which some have dreamed of; because however many of them may rise out of their

class, these become at once part of the middle class, owners of capital, even though it be in a small way, and exploiters of labour; and there is still left behind a lower class which in its own turn drags down to it the unsuccessful in the struggle; a process which is being accelerated in these latter days by the rapid growth of the great factories and stores, which are extinguishing the remains of the small workshops served by men who may hope to become small masters, and also the smaller of the tradesman class. Thus then, feeling that it is impossible for them to rise as a class, while competition naturally, and as a necessity for its existence, keeps them down, they have begun to look to association as their natural tendency, just as competition is looked to by the capitalists; in them the hope has arisen, if nowhere else, of finally making an end of class degradation.

It is in the belief that this hope is spreading to the middle classes that I stand before you now, pleading for its acceptance by you, in the certainty that in its fulfilment alone lies the other hope for the new birth of Art and the attainment by the middle classes of true refinement, the lack of which at present is so grievously betokened by the sordidness and baseness of all the external surroundings of our lives, even those of us who are rich. I know there are some to whom this possibility of the getting rid of class degradation may come, not as a hope, but as a fear. These may comfort themselves by thinking that this Socialist matter is a hollow scare, in England at least; that the proletariat have no hope, and therefore will lie quiet in this country, where the rapid and nearly complete development of commercialism has crushed the power of combination out of the lower classes; where the very combinations, the Trades Unions, founded for the advancement of the working class as a class, have already become conservative and obstructive bodies, wielded by the middle-class politicians for party purposes; where the proportion of the town and manufacturing districts to the country is so great that the inhabitants, no longer recruited by the peasantry but become townsmen bred of townsmen,

are yearly deteriorating in physique; where lastly education is so backward.

It may be that in England the mass of the working classes has no hope; that it will not be hard to keep them down for a while, possibly a long while. The hope that this may be so I will say plainly is a dastard's hope, for it is founded on the chance of their degradation. I say such an expectation is that of slave-holders or the hangers-on of slave-holders. I believe, however, that hope is growing among the working classes even in England; at any rate you may be sure of one thing, that there is at least discontent. Can any of us doubt that, since there is unjust suffering? Or which of us would be contented with ten shillings a week to keep our households with, or to dwell in unutterable filth and have to pay the price of good lodging for it? Do you doubt that if we had any time for it amidst our struggle to live we should look into the title of those who kept us there, themselves rich and comfortable, under the pretext that it was necessary to society? I tell you there is plenty of discontent, and I call on all those who think there is something better than making money for the sake of making it to help in educating that discontent into hope, that is into the demand for the new birth of society; and I do this not because I am afraid of it, but because I myself am discontented and long for justice.

Yet, if any of you are afraid of the discontent which is abroad, in its present shape, I cannot say that you have no reason to be. I am representing reconstructive Socialism before you; but there are other people who call themselves Socialists whose aim is not reconstruction, but destruction; people who think that the present state of things is horrible and unbearable (as in very truth it is), and that there is nothing for it but to shake society by constant blows given at any sacrifice, so that it may at last totter and fall. May it not be worth while, think you, to combat such a doctrine by supplying discontent with hope of change that involves reconstruction? Meanwhile, be sure that, though the day of change may be long delayed, it will come at last. The

middle classes will one day become conscious of the discontent of the proletariat; before that some will have renounced their class and cast in their lot with the working men, influenced by love of justice or insight into facts. For the rest, they will, when their conscience is awakened, have two choices before them; they must either cast aside their morality, of which though three parts are cant, the other is sincere, or they must give way. In either case I do believe that the change will come, and that nothing will seriously retard that new birth; yet I well know that the middle class may do much to give a peaceable or a violent character to the education of discontent which must precede it. Hinder it, and who knows what violence you may be driven into, even to the renunciation of the morality of which we middle-class men are so proud; advance it, strive single-heartedly that truth may prevail, and what need you fear? At any rate not your own violence, not your own tyranny?

Again I say things have gone too far, and the pretence at least of a love of justice is too common among us, for the middle classes to attempt to keep the proletariat in its condition of slavery to capital, as soon as they stir seriously in the matter, except at the cost of complete degradation to themselves, the middle class, whatever else may happen. I cannot help hoping that there are some here who are already in dread of the shadow of that degradation of consciously sustaining an injustice, and are eager to escape from that half-ignorant tyranny of which Keats tells, and which is, sooth to say, the common condition of rich people. To those I have a last word or two to say in begging them to renounce their class pretensions and cast in their lot with the working men. It may be that some of them are kept from actively furthering the cause which they believe in by that dread of organization, by that unpracticality in a word, which, as it is very common in England generally, is more common among highly cultivated people, and, if you will forgive the word, most common in our ancient universities. Since I am a member of a Socialist propaganda I earnestly beg those of you who

agree with me to help us actively, with your time and your talents if you can, but if not, at least with your money, as you can. Do not hold aloof from us, since you agree with us, because we have not attained that delicacy of manners, that refinement of language, nay, even that prudent and careful wisdom of action which the long oppression of competitive commerce has crushed out of us. Art under Plutocracy

Art is long and life is short; let us at least do something before we die. We seek perfection, but can find no perfect means to bring it about; let it be enough for us if we can unite with those whose aims are right, and their means honest and feasible. I tell you if we wait for perfection in association in these days of combat we shall die before we can do anything. Help us now, you whom the fortune of your birth has helped to make wise and refined; and as you help us in our work-a-day business toward the success of the cause, instil into us your superior wisdom, your superior refinement, and you in your turn may be helped by the courage and hope of those who are not so completely wise and refined. Remember we have but one weapon against that terrible organization of selfishness which we attack, and that weapon is Union. Yes, and it should be obvious union, which we can be conscious of as we mix with others who are hostile or indifferent to the cause; organized brotherhood is that which must break the spell of anarchical Plutocracy. One man with an idea in his head is in danger of being considered a madman; two men with the same idea in common may be foolish, but can hardly be mad; ten men sharing an idea begin to act, a hundred draw attention as fanatics, a thousand and society begins to tremble, a hundred thousand and there is war abroad, and the cause has victories tangible and real; and why only a hundred thousand? Why not a hundred million and peace upon the earth? You and I who agree together, it is we who have to answer that question.

ART AND SOCIALISM: A LECTURE DELIVERED BEFORE THE SECULAR SOCIETY OF LEICESTER, 23RD JANUARY, 1884.

MY friends, I want you to look into the relation of Art to Commerce, using the latter word to express what is generally meant by it; namely, that system of competition in the market which is indeed the only form which most people nowadays suppose that Commerce can take. Now whereas there have been times in the world's history when Art held the supremacy over Commerce; when Art was a good deal, and Commerce, as we understand the word, was a very little; so now on the contrary it will be admitted by all, I fancy, that Commerce has become of very great importance and Art of very little. I say this will be generally admitted, but different persons will hold very different opinions not only as to whether this is well or ill, but even as to what it really means when we say that Commerce has become of supreme importance and that Art has sunk into an unimportant matter.

Allow me to give you my opinion of the meaning of it: which will lead me on to ask you to consider what remedies should be applied for curing the evils that exist in the relations between Art and Commerce. Now to speak plainly it seems to me that the supremacy of Commerce (as we understand the word) is an evil, and a very serious one; and I should call it an unmixed evil but for the strange continuity of life which runs through all historical events, and by means of which the very evils of such and such a period tend to abolish themselves. For to my mind it means this: that the world of modern civilization in its haste to gain a very inequitably divided material prosperity has entirely suppressed popular Art; or in other words that the greater part of the people have no share in Art, which as things now are must be kept in the hands of a few rich or well-to-do people, who we may fairly say need it less and not more than the laborious workers. Nor is that all the evil, nor the

worst of it; for the cause of this famine of Art is that whilst people work throughout the civilized world as laboriously as ever they did, they have lost, in losing an Art which was done by and for the people, the natural solace of their labour; a solace which they once had, and always should have; the opportunity of expressing their own thoughts to their fellows by means of that very labour, by means of that daily work which nature or long custom, a second nature, does indeed require of them, but without meaning that it should be an unrewarded and repulsive burden. But, through a strange blindness and error in the civilization of these latter days, the world's work, almost all of it, the work some share of which should have been the helpful companion of every man, has become even such a burden, which every man, if he could, would shake off. I have said that people work no less laboriously than they ever did; but I should have said that they work more laboriously. The wonderful machines which in the hands of just and foreseeing men would have been used to minimize repulsive labour and to give pleasure, or in other words added life, to the human race, have been so used on the contrary that they have driven all men into mere frantic haste and hurry, thereby destroying pleasure, that is life, on all hands: they have, instead of lightening the labour of the workmen, intensified it, and thereby added more weariness yet to the burden which the poor have to carry.

Nor can it be pleaded for the system of modern civilization that the mere material or bodily gains of it balance the loss of pleasure which it has brought upon the world; for as I hinted before those gains have been so unfairly divided that the contrast between rich and poor has been fearfully intensified, so that in all civilized countries, but most of all in England, the terrible spectacle is exhibited of two peoples living street by street and door by door, people of the same blood, the same tongue, and at least nominally living under the same laws, but yet one civilized and the other uncivilized. All this I say is the result of the system that has

trampled down Art, and exalted Commerce into a sacred religion; and it would seem is ready, with the ghastly stupidity which is its principal characteristic, to mock the Roman satirist for his noble warning by taking it in inverse meaning, and now bids us all for the sake of life to destroy the reasons for living.

And now in the teeth of this stupid tyranny I put forward a claim on behalf of labour enslaved by Commerce, which I know no thinking man can deny is reasonable, but which if acted on would involve such a change as would defeat Commerce; that is, would put Association instead of Competition, Social Order instead of Individualist Anarchy. Yet I have looked at this claim by the light of history and my own conscience, and it seems to me so looked at to be a most just claim, and that resistance to it means nothing short of a denial of the hope of civilization. This then is the claim: *It is right and necessary that all men should have work to do which shall be worth doing, and be of itself pleasant to do; and which should be done under such conditions as would make it neither over-wearisome nor over-anxious.* Turn that claim about as I may, think of it as long as I can, I cannot find that it is an exorbitant claim; yet again I say if Society would or could admit it, the face of the world would be changed; discontent and strife and dishonesty would be ended. To feel that we were doing work useful to others and pleasant to ourselves, and that such work and its due reward could not fail us! What serious harm could happen to us then? And the price to be paid for so making the world happy is Revolution: Socialism instead of Laissez faire.

How can we of the middle classes help to bring such a state of things about: a state of things as nearly as possible the reverse of the present state of things? The reverse; no less than that. For first, THE WORK MUST BE WORTH DOING: think what a change that would make in the world! I tell you I feel dazed at the thought of the immensity of work which is undergone for the making of useless things. It would be an instructive day's work for

any one of us who is strong enough to walk through two or three of the principal streets of London on a week-day, and take accurate note of everything in the shop windows which is embarrassing or superfluous to the daily life of a serious man. Nay, the most of these things no one, serious or unserious, wants at all; only a foolish habit makes even the lightest-minded of us suppose that he wants them, and to many people even of those who buy them they are obvious encumbrances to real work, thought, and pleasure. But I beg you to think of the enormous mass of men who are occupied with this miserable trumpery, from the engineers who have had to make the machines for making them, down to the hapless clerks who sit daylong year after year in the horrible dens wherein the wholesale exchange of them is transacted, and the shopmen who, not daring to call their souls their own, retail them amidst numberless insults which they must not resent, to the idle public which doesn't want them, but buys them to be bored by them and sick to death of them. I am talking of the merely useless things; but there are other matters not merely useless, but actively destructive and poisonous, which command a good price in the market; for instance, adulterated food and drink. Vast is the number of slaves whom competitive Commerce employs in turning out infamies such as these. But quite apart from them there is an enormous mass of labour which is just merely wasted; many thousands of men and women making Nothing with terrible and inhuman toil which deadens the soul and shortens mere animal life itself.

All these are the slaves of what is called luxury, which in the modern sense of the word comprises a mass of sham wealth, the invention of competitive Commerce, and enslaves not only the poor people who are compelled to work at its production, but also the foolish and not over happy people who buy it to harass themselves with its encumbrance. Now if we are to have popular Art, or indeed Art of any kind, we must at once and for all be done with this luxury; it is the supplanter, the changeling of Art; so much so that by

those who know of nothing better it has even been taken for Art, the divine solace of human labour, the romance of each day's hard practice of the difficult art of living. But I say Art cannot live beside it, nor self-respect in any class of life. Effeminacy and brutality are its companions on the right hand and the left. This, first of all, we of the well-to-do classes must get rid of if we are serious in desiring the new birth of Art: and if not, then corruption is digging a terrible pit of perdition for society, from which indeed the new birth may come, but surely from amidst of terror, violence, and misery. Indeed if it were but ridding ourselves, the well-to-do people, of this mountain of rubbish, that would be something worth doing: things which everybody knows are of no use; the very capitalists know well that there is no genuine healthy demand for them, and they are compelled to foist them off on the public by stirring up a strange feverish desire for petty excitement, the outward token of which is known by the conventional name of fashion, a strange monster born of the vacancy of the lives of rich people, and the eagerness of competitive Commerce to make the most of the huge crowd of workmen whom it breeds as unregarded instruments for what is called the making of money.

Do not think it a little matter to resist this monster of folly; to think for yourselves what you yourselves really desire, will not only make men and women of you so far, but may also set you thinking of the due desires of other people, since you will soon find when you get to know a work of art, that slavish work is undesirable. And here furthermore is at least a little sign whereby to distinguish between a rag of fashion and a work of art: whereas the toys of fashion when the first gloss is worn off them do become obviously worthless even to the frivolous, a work of art, be it never so humble, is long-lived; we never tire of it; as long as a scrap hangs together it is valuable and instructive to each new generation. All works of art in short have the property of becoming venerable amidst decay; and reason good, for from

the first there was a soul in them, the thought of man, which will be visible in them so long as the body exists in which they were implanted.

And that last sentence brings me to considering the other side of the necessity for labour only occupying itself in making goods that are worth making. Hitherto we have been thinking of it only from the user's point of view; even so looked at it was surely important enough; yet from the other side, as to the producer, it is far more important still. For I say again that in buying these things

'Tis the lives of men you buy!

Will you from mere folly and thoughtlessness make yourselves partakers of the guilt of those who compel their fellow-men to labour uselessly? For when I said it was necessary for all things made to be worth making, I set up that claim chiefly on behalf of Labour; since the waste of making useless things grieves the workman doubly. As part of the public he is forced into buying them, and the more part of his miserable wages is squeezed out of him by an universal kind of truck system; as one of the producers he is forced into making them, and so into losing the very foundations of that pleasure in daily work which I claim as his birthright; he is compelled to labour joylessly at making the poison which the truck system compels him to buy. So that the huge mass of men who are compelled by folly and greed to make harmful and useless things are sacrificed to Society. I say that this would be terrible and unendurable even though they were sacrificed to the good of Society, if that were possible; but if they are sacrificed not for the welfare of Society but for its whims, to add to its degradation, what do luxury and fashion look like then? On one side ruinous and wearisome waste leading through corruption to corruption on to complete cynicism at last, and the disintegration of all Society; and on the other side implacable oppression destructive of all pleasure and hope in life, and leading—whitherward?

Here then is one thing for us of the middle classes to do before we can clear the ground for the new birth of Art, before we can clear our own consciences of the guilt of enslaving men by their labour. One thing; and if we could do it perhaps that one thing would be enough, and all other healthy changes would follow it: but can we do it? Can we escape from the corruption of Society which threatens us? Can the middle classes regenerate themselves? At first sight one would say that a body of people so powerful, who have built up the gigantic edifice of modern Commerce, whose science, invention, and energy have subdued the forces of nature to serve their everyday purposes, and who guide the organization that keeps these natural powers in subjection in a way almost miraculous; at first sight one would say surely such a mighty mass of wealthy men could do anything they please. And yet I doubt it: their own creation, the Commerce they are so proud of, has become their master; and all we of the well-to-do classes, some of us with triumphant glee, some with dull satisfaction, and some with sadness of heart, are compelled to admit not that Commerce was made for man, but that man was made for Commerce.

On all sides we are forced to admit it. There are of the English middle class to-day, for instance, men of the highest aspirations towards Art, and of the strongest will; men who are most deeply convinced of the necessity to civilization of surrounding men's lives with beauty; and many lesser men, thousands for what I know, refined and cultivated, follow them and praise their opinions. But both the leaders and the led are incapable of saving so much as half-a-dozen commons from the grasp of inexorable Commerce: they are as helpless in spite of their culture and their genius as if they were just so many over-worked shoemakers. Less lucky than King Midas, our green fields and clear waters, nay, the very air we breathe, are turned not to gold (which might please some of us for an hour maybe) but to dirt; and to speak plainly we know full well that under the present gospel of Capital not only there is no hope of bettering it, but that things grow

worse year by year, day by day. Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die, choked by filth.

Or let me give you a direct example of the slavery to competitive Commerce, in which we hapless folk of the middle classes live. I have exhorted you to the putting away of luxury, to the stripping yourselves of useless encumbrances, to the simplification of life, and I believe that there are not a few of you that heartily agree with me on that point. Well, I have long thought that one of the most revolting circumstances that cling to our present class-system is the relation between us of the well-to-do and our domestic servants: we and our servants live together under one roof, but are little better than strangers to each other, in spite of the good nature and good feeling that often exists on both sides: nay, strangers is a mild word; though we are of the same blood, bound by the same laws, we live together like people of different tribes. Now think how this works on the job of getting through the ordinary day's work of a household, and whether our lives can be simplified while such a system lasts. To go no further, you who are housekeepers know full well (as I myself do, since I have learnt the useful art of cooking a dinner) how it would simplify the day's work, if the chief meals could be eaten in common; if there had not got to be double meals, one upstairs, another downstairs. And again, surely we of this educational century cannot be ignorant of what an education it would be for the less refined members of a household to meet on common easy terms the more refined once a day at least; to note the elegant manners of well-bred ladies, to give and take in talk with learned and travelled men, with men of action and imagination: believe me, that would beat elementary education.

Furthermore this matter cleaves close to our subject of Art: for note, as a token of this stupidity of our sham civilization, what foolish rabbit-warrens our well-to-do houses are obliged to be; instead of being planned in the rational ancient way which was used from the time of Homer to past the time of Chaucer, a big hall, to wit, with a few chambers

tacked on to it for sleeping or sulking in. No wonder our houses are cramped and ignoble when the lives lived in them are cramped and ignoble also. Well, and why don't we who have thought of this, as I am sure many of us have, change this mean and shabby custom, simplifying our lives thereby and educating our friends, to whose toil we owe so many comforts? Why do not you and I set about doing this to-morrow? Because we cannot: because our servants wouldn't have it, knowing, as we know, that both parties would be made miserable by it. The civilization of the nineteenth century forbids us to share the refinement of a household among its members! So you see, if we middle-class people belong to a powerful folk, and in good sooth we do, we are but playing a part played in many a tale of the world's history: we are great but hapless; we are important dignified people, but bored to death; we have bought our power at the price of our liberty and our pleasure. So I can say in answer to the question: Can we put luxury from us and live simple and decent lives? Yes, when we are free from the slavery of Capitalist Commerce; but not before.

Surely there are some of you who long to be free; who have been educated and refined, and had your perceptions of beauty and order quickened only that they might be shocked and wounded at every turn by the brutalities of competitive Commerce; who have been so hunted and driven by it that, though you are well-to-do, rich even maybe, you have now nothing to lose from social revolution: love of art, that is to say of the true pleasure of life, has brought you to this, that you must throw in your lot with that of the wage-slave of competitive Commerce; you and he must help each other and have one hope in common, or you at any rate will live and die hopeless and unhelped. You who long to be set free from the oppression of the money-grubbers hope for the day when you will be compelled to be free!

Meanwhile, if otherwise that oppression has left us scarce any work to do worth doing, one thing at least is left us to strive for, the raising of the standard of life where it is lowest,

where it is low: that will put a spoke in the wheel of the triumphant car of competitive Commerce. Nor can I conceive of anything more likely to raise the standard of life than the convincing some thousands of those who live by labour of the necessity of their supporting the second part of the claim I have made for Labour; namely, THAT THEIR WORK SHOULD BE OF ITSELF PLEASANT TO DO. If we could but convince them that such a strange revolution in Labour as this would be of infinite benefit not to them only, but to all men; and that it is so right and natural that for the reverse to be the case, that most men's work should be grievous to them, is a mere monstrosity of these latter days, which must in the long run bring ruin and confusion on the society that allows it—if we could but convince them, then indeed there would be chance of the phrase Art of the People being something more than a mere word. At first sight, indeed, it would seem impossible to make men born under the present system of Commerce understand that labour may be a blessing to them: not in the sense in which the phrase is sometimes preached to them by those whose labour is light and easily evaded: not as a necessary task laid by nature on the poor for the benefit of the rich: not as an opiate to dull their sense of right and wrong, to make them sit down quietly under their burdens to the end of time, blessing the squire and his relations: all this they could understand our saying to them easily enough, and sometimes would listen to it I fear with at least a show of complacency, if they thought there were anything to be made out of us thereby. But the true doctrine that labour should be a real tangible blessing in itself to the working man, a pleasure even as sleep and strong drink are to him now: this one might think it hard indeed for him to understand, so different as it is from anything which he has found labour to be.

Nevertheless, though most men's work is only borne as a necessary evil like sickness, my experience as far as it goes is, that whether it be from a certain sacredness in handiwork which does cleave to it even under the worst circumstances,

or whether it be that the poor man who is driven by necessity to deal with things which are terribly real, when he thinks at all on such matters, thinks less conventionally than the rich; whatever it may be, my experience so far is that the working-man finds it easier to understand the doctrine of the claim of Labour to pleasure in the work itself than the rich or well-to-do man does. Apart from any trivial words of my own, I have been surprised to find, for instance, such a hearty feeling toward John Ruskin among working-class audiences: they can see the prophet in him rather than the fantastic rhetorician, as more superfine audiences do. That is a good omen, I think, for the education of times to come. But we who somehow are so tainted by cynicism, because of our helplessness in the ugly world which surrounds and presses on us, cannot we somehow raise our own hopes at least to the point of thinking that what hope glimmers on the millions of the slaves of Commerce is something better than a mere delusion, the false dawn of a cloudy midnight with which 'tis only the moon that struggles? Let us call to mind that there yet remain monuments in the world which show us that all human labour was not always a grief and a burden to men. Let us think of the mighty and lovely architecture, for instance, of mediæval Europe: of the buildings raised before Commerce had put the coping-stone on the edifice of tyranny by the discovery that fancy, imagination, sentiment, the joy of creation, and the hope of fair fame, are marketable articles too precious to be allowed to men who have not the money to buy them, to mere handicraftsmen and day-labourers. Let us remember there was a time when men had pleasure in their daily work, but yet, as to other matters, hoped for light and freedom even as they do now: their dim hope grew brighter, and they watched its seeming fulfilment drawing nearer and nearer, and gazed so eagerly on it that they did not note how the ever watchful foe, oppression, had changed his shape and was stealing from them what they had already gained in the days when the light of their new hope was but a feeble glimmer: so they lost the old gain, and for

lack of it the new gain was changed and spoiled for them into something not much better than loss.

Betwixt the days in which we now live and the end of the Middle Ages, Europe has gained freedom of thought, increase of knowledge, and huge talent for dealing with the material forces of nature; comparative political freedom withal and respect for the lives of civilized men, and other gains that go with these things: nevertheless I say deliberately that if the present state of society is to endure, she has bought these gains at too high a price in the loss of the pleasure in daily work which once did certainly solace the mass of men for their fears and oppressions: the death of Art was too high a price to pay for the material prosperity of the middle classes. Grievous indeed it was, that we could not keep both our hands full, that we were forced to spill from one while we gathered with the other: yet to my mind it is more grievous still to be unconscious of the loss; or being dimly conscious of it to have to force ourselves to forget it and to cry out that all is well. For, though all is not well, I know that men's natures are not so changed in three centuries that we can say to all the thousands of years which went before them: You were wrong to cherish Art, and now we have found out that all men need is food and raiment and shelter, with a smattering of knowledge of the material fashion of the universe. Creation is no longer a need of man's soul, his right hand may forget its cunning, and he be none the worse for it.

Three hundred years, a day in the lapse of ages, have not changed man's nature thus utterly, be sure of that: one day we shall win back Art, that is to say the pleasure of life; win back Art again to our daily labour. Where is the hope then? you may say, Show it us! There lies the hope, where hope of old deceived us. We gave up Art for what we thought was light and freedom, but it was less than light and freedom which we bought: the light showed many things to those of the well-to-do who cared to look for them: the freedom left the well-to-do free enough if they cared to use

their freedom; but these were few at the best: to the most of men the light showed them that they need look for hope no more, and the freedom left the most of men free to take at a wretched wage what slave's work lay nearest to them or starve.

There is our hope, I say. If the bargain had been really fair, complete all round, then were there nought else to do but to bury Art, and forget the beauty of life: but now the cause of Art has something else to appeal to; no less than the hope of the people for the happy life which has not yet been granted to them. There is our hope: the cause of Art is the cause of the people. Think of a piece of history, and so hope! Time was when the rule of Rome held the whole world of civilization in its poisonous embrace. To all men, even the best, as you may see in the very Gospels, that rule seemed doomed to last for ever: nor to those who dwelt under it was there any world worth thinking of beyond it. But the days passed and though none saw a shadow of the coming change, it came none the less, like a thief in the night, and the Barbarians, the world which lay outside the rule of Rome, were upon her; and men blind with terror lamented the change and deemed the world undone by the Fury of the North. But even that fury bore with it things long strange to Rome, which once had been the food its glory fed on: hatred of lies, scorn of riches, contempt of death, faith in the fair fame won by steadfast endurance, honourable love of women: all these things the Northern Fury bore with it, as the mountain torrent bears the gold; and so Rome fell and Europe rose, and the hope of the world was born again. To those that have hearts to understand, this tale of the past is a parable of the days to come; of the change in store for us hidden in the breast of the Barbarism of civilization, the Proletariat: and we of the middle class, the strength of the mighty but monstrous system of competitive Commerce, it behoves us to clear our souls of greed and cowardice and to face the change which is now once more on the road; to see the good and the hope it bears with it amidst all its threats of violence, amidst all its

ugliness, which was not born of itself but of that which it is doomed to destroy.

Now once more I will say that we well-to-do people, those of us who love Art, not as a toy, but as a thing necessary to the life of man, as a token of his freedom and happiness, have for our best work the raising of the standard of life among the people; or in other words, establishing the claim I made for Labour, which I will now put in a different form, that we may try to see what chiefly hinders us from making that claim good and what are the enemies to be attacked. Thus then I put the claim again: *Nothing should be made by man's labour which is not worth making, or which must be made by labour degrading to the makers.*

Simple as that proposition is, and obviously right as I am sure it must seem to you, you will find, when you come to consider the matter, that it is a direct challenge to the death to the present system of labour in civilized countries. That system, which I have called competitive Commerce, is distinctly a system of war; that is, of waste and destruction, or you may call it gambling if you will; the point of it being that under it whatever a man gains he gains at the expense of some other man's loss. Such a system does not and cannot heed whether the matters it makes are worth making; it does not and cannot heed whether those who make them are degraded by their work: it heeds one thing and only one, namely what it calls making a profit; which word has come to be used so conventionally that I must explain to you what it really means, to wit, the plunder of the weak by the strong. Now I say of this system, that it is of its very nature destructive of Art, that is to say of the happiness of life. Whatever consideration is shown for the life of the people in these days, whatever is done which is worth doing, is done in spite of the system and in the teeth of its maxims; and most true it is that we do all of us tacitly at least admit that it is opposed to all the highest aspirations of mankind.

Do we not know, for instance, how those men of genius work who are the salt of the earth, without whom the cor-

ruption of Society would long ago have become unendurable? The poet, the artist, the man of science, is it not true that in their fresh and glorious days, when they are in the heyday of their faith and enthusiasm, they are thwarted at every turn by Commercial War, with its sneering question "Will it pay?" Is it not true that when they begin to win worldly success, when they become comparatively rich, in spite of ourselves they seem to us tainted by the contact with the commercial world? Need I speak of great schemes that hang about neglected; of things most necessary to be done, and so confessed by all men, that no one can seriously set a hand to because of the lack of money; while if it be a question of creating or stimulating some foolish whim in the public mind, the satisfaction of which will breed a profit, the money will come in by the ton? Nay, you know what an old story it is of the wars bred by Commerce in search of new markets, which not even the most peaceable of statesmen can resist; an old story and still it seems for ever new, and now become a kind of grim joke, at which I would rather not laugh if I could help it, but am even forced to laugh from a soul laden with anger.

And all that mastery over the powers of nature which the last hundred years or less have given us: what has it done for us under this system? In the opinion of John Stuart Mill, it was doubtful if all the mechanical inventions of modern times have done anything to lighten the toil of labour: be sure there is no doubt that they were not made for that end, but to make a profit. Those almost miraculous machines, which if orderly forethought had dealt with them might even now be speedily extinguishing all irksome and unintelligent labour, leaving us free to raise the standard of skill of hand and energy of mind in our workmen, and to produce afresh that loveliness and order which only the hand of man guided by his soul can produce; what have they done for us now? Those machines of which the civilized world is so proud, has it any right to be proud of the use they have been put to by commercial war and waste?

I do not think exultation can have a place here: commercial war has made a profit of these wonders; that is to say it has by their means bred for itself millions of unhappy workers, unintelligent machines as far as their daily work goes, in order to get cheap labour, to keep up its exciting but deadly game for ever. Indeed that labour would have been cheap enough, cheap to the commercial war generals, and deadly dear to the rest of us, but for the seeds of freedom which valiant men of old have sowed amongst us to spring up in our own day into Chartism and Trades Unionism and Socialism, for the defence of order and a decent life. Terrible would have been our slavery, and not of the working classes alone, but for these germs of the change which must be. Even as it is, by the reckless aggregation of machine-workers and their adjoints in the great cities and the manufacturing districts, it has kept down life amongst us and keeps it down to a miserably low standard; so low that any standpoint for improvement is hard even to think of. By the means of speedy communication which it has created, and which should have raised the standard of life by spreading intelligence from town to country, and widely creating modest centres of freedom of thought and habits of culture; by the means of the railways and the like, it has gathered to itself fresh recruits for the reserve army of competing lack-alls on which its gambling gains so much depend, stripping the countryside of its population, and extinguishing all reasonable hope and life in the lesser towns.

Nor can I, an artist, think last or least of the outward effects which betoken this rule of the wretched anarchy of commercial war. Think of the spreading sore of London swallowing up with its loathsomeness field and wood and heath without mercy and without hope, mocking our feeble efforts to deal even with its minor evils of smoke-laden sky and befouled river: the black horror and reckless squalor of our manufacturing districts, so dreadful to the senses which are unused to them that it is ominous for the future of the race that any man can live among it in tolerable cheerfulness:

nay, in the open country itself the thrusting aside by miserable jerry-built brick and slate of the solid grey dwellings that are still scattered about, fit emblems in their cheery but beautiful simplicity of the yeomen of the English field, whose destruction at the hands of the as yet young commercial war was lamented so touchingly by the high-minded More and the valiant Latimer. Everywhere in short the change from old to new involves one certainty, whatever else may be doubtful, a worsening of the aspect of the country.

This is the condition of England: of England the country of order, peace, and stability, the land of common sense and practicality; the country to which all eyes are turned of those whose hope is for the continuance and perfection of modern progress. There are countries in Europe whose aspect is not so ruined outwardly, though they may have less of material prosperity, less widespread middle-class wealth to balance the squalor and disgrace I have mentioned: but if they are members of the great commercial whole, through the same mill they have got to go, unless something should happen to turn aside the triumphant march of War Commercial before it reaches the end. That is what three centuries of Commerce have brought that hope to, which sprang up when feudalism began to fall to pieces. What can give us the dayspring of a new hope? What, save general revolt against the tyranny of commercial war? The palliatives over which many worthy people are busying themselves now are useless: because they are but unorganized partial revolts against a vast wide-spreading grasping organization which will, with the unconscious instinct of a plant, meet every attempt at bettering the condition of the people with an attack on a fresh side; new machines, new markets, wholesale emigration, the revival of grovelling superstitions, preachments of thrift to lack-alls, of temperance to the wretched; such things as these will baffle at every turn all partial revolts against the monster we of the middle classes have created for our own undoing.

I will speak quite plainly on this matter, though I must say an ugly word in the end if I am to say what I think. The one thing to be done is to set people far and wide to think it possible to raise the standard of life. If you think of it, you will see clearly that this means stirring up general discontent. And now to illustrate that I turn back to my blended claim for Art and Labour, that I may deal with the third clause in it: here is the claim again: *It is right and necessary that all men should have work to do: First, Work worth doing; Second, Work of itself pleasant to do; Third, Work done under such conditions as would make it neither over-wearisome nor over-anxious.*

With the first and second clauses, which are very nearly related to each other, I have tried to deal already. They are as it were the soul of the claim for proper labour; the third clause is the body without which that soul cannot exist. I will extend it in this way, which will indeed partly carry us over ground already covered: *No one who is willing to work should ever fear want of such employment as would earn for him all due necessaries of mind and body.* All due necessaries: what are the due necessaries for a good citizen? First, honourable and fitting work: which would involve giving him a chance of gaining capacity for his work by due education; also, as the work must be worth doing and pleasant to do, it will be found necessary to this end that his position be so assured to him that he cannot be compelled to do useless work, or work in which he cannot take pleasure.

The second necessity is decency of surroundings: including 1. good lodging; 2. ample space; 3. general order and beauty. That is: 1. Our houses must be well built, clean, and healthy. 2. There must be abundant garden space in our towns, and our towns must not eat up the fields and natural features of the country; nay, I demand even that there be left waste places and wilds in it, or romance and poetry, that is Art, will die out amongst us. 3. Order and beauty means that not only our houses must be stoutly and properly built, but also that they be ornamented duly:

that the fields be not only left for cultivation, but also that they be not spoilt by it any more than a garden is spoilt: no one for instance to be allowed to cut down, for mere profit, trees whose loss would spoil a landscape: neither on any pretext should people be allowed to darken the daylight with smoke, to befoul rivers, or to degrade any spot of earth with squalid litter and brutal wasteful disorder.

The third necessity is leisure. You will understand that in using that word I imply first that all men must work for some portion of the day, and secondly that they have a positive right to claim a respite from that work: the leisure they have a right to claim must be ample enough to allow them full rest of mind and body: a man must have time for serious individual thought, for imagination, for dreaming even, or the race of men will inevitably worsen. Even of the honourable and fitting work of which I have been speaking, which is a whole heaven asunder from the forced work of the capitalist system, a man must not be asked to give more than his fair share; or men will become unequally developed, and there will still be a rotten place in society.

Here then I have given you the conditions under which work worth doing and undegrading to do can be done: under no other conditions can it be done: if the general work of the world is not worth doing and undegrading to do it is a mockery to talk of civilization. Well then, can these conditions be obtained under the present gospel of Capital, which has for its motto "The devil take the hindmost"? Let us look at our claim again in other words: *In a properly ordered state of Society every man willing to work should be ensured: First, Honourable and fitting work; Second, A healthy and beautiful house; Third, Full leisure for rest of mind and body.*

Now I don't suppose that anybody here will deny that it would be desirable that this claim should be satisfied: but what I want you all to think is that it is necessary that it be satisfied; that unless we try our utmost to satisfy it, we are but part and parcel of a society founded on robbery and in-

justice, condemned by the laws of the universe to destroy itself by its own efforts to exist for ever. Furthermore, I want you to think that as on the one hand it is possible to satisfy this claim, so on the other hand it is impossible to satisfy it under the present plutocratic system, which will forbid us even any serious attempt to satisfy it: the beginnings of Social Revolution must be the foundations of the rebuilding of the Art of the People, that is to say of the Pleasure of Life. To say ugly words again; do we not know that the greater part of men in civilized societies are dirty, ignorant, brutal, or at best, anxious about their next week's subsistence; that they are in short poor? And we know, when we think of it, that this is unfair. It is an old story of men who have become rich by dishonest and tyrannical means, spending in terror of the future their ill-gotten gains liberally and in charity as 'tis called: nor are such people praised; in the old tales 'tis thought that the devil gets them after all. An old story: but I say, "De te fabula"; of THEE is the story told: THOU art the man! I say that we of the rich and well-to-do classes are daily doing in like wise: unconsciously, or half consciously it may be, we gather wealth by trading on the hard necessity of our fellows, and then we give driblets of it away to those of them who in one way or another cry out loudest to us. Our poor-laws, our hospitals, our charities, organized and unorganized, are but tubs thrown to the whale: blackmail paid to lame-foot justice, that she may not hobble after us too fast.

When will the time come when honest and clear-seeing men will grow sick of all this chaos of waste, this robbing of Peter to pay Paul, which is the essence of commercial war? When shall we band together to replace the system whose motto is "The devil take the hindmost" with a system whose motto shall be really and without qualification "One for all and all for one"? Who knows but the time may be at hand, but that we now living may see the beginning of that end which shall extinguish luxury and poverty? when the upper, middle, and lower classes shall have melted into one

class, living contentedly a simple and happy life? That is a long sentence to describe the state of things which I am asking you to help to bring about: the abolition of slavery is a shorter one and means the same thing. You may be tempted to think the end not worth striving for on the one hand, or on the other to suppose, each one of you, that it is so far ahead that nothing serious can be done towards it in our own time, and that you may as well therefore sit quiet and do nothing. Let me remind you how only the other day in the lifetime of the youngest of us many thousand men of our own kindred gave their lives on the battle-field to bring to a happy ending a mere episode in the struggle for the abolition of slavery: they are blessed and happy, for the opportunity came to them, and they seized it and did their best, and the world is the wealthier for it: and if such an opportunity is offered to us shall we thrust it from us that we may sit still in ease of body, in doubt, in disease of soul? These are the days of combat: who can doubt that as he hears all round him the sounds that betoken discontent and hope and fear in high and low, the sounds of awakening courage and awakening conscience? These, I say, are the days of combat, when there is no external peace possible to an honest man; but when for that very reason the internal peace of a good conscience founded on settled convictions is the easier to win, since action for the cause is offered us.

Or will you say that here in this quiet, constitutionally governed country of England there is no opportunity for action offered to us? If we were in gagged Germany, in gagged Austria, in Russia where a word or two might land us in Siberia or the prison of the fortress of Peter and Paul; why then, indeed—Ah! my friends, it is but a poor tribute to offer on the tombs of the martyrs of liberty, this refusal to take the torch from their dying hands! Is it not of Goethe it is told, that on hearing one say he was going to America to begin life again, he replied: "Here is America, or nowhere"? So for my part I say: "Here is Russia, or nowhere." To say the governing classes in England are not afraid of

freedom of speech, therefore let us abstain from speaking freely, is a strange paradox to me. Let us on the contrary press in through the breach which valiant men have made for us: if we hang back we make their labours, their sufferings, their deaths, of no account. Believe me, we shall be shown that it is all or nothing: or will any one here tell me that a Russian moujik is in a worse case than a sweating tailor's wage-slave? Do not let us deceive ourselves, the class of victims exists here as in Russia. There are fewer of them? Maybe; then are they of themselves more helpless, and so have more need of our help.

And how can we of the middle classes, we the capitalists, and our hangers-on, help them? By renouncing our class, and on all occasions when antagonism rises up between the classes casting in our lot with the victims: with those who are condemned at the best to lack of education, refinement, leisure, pleasure, and renown; and at the worst to a life lower than that of the most brutal of savages in order that the system of competitive Commerce may endure. There is no other way: and this way, I tell you plainly, will in the long run give us plentiful occasion for self-sacrifice without going to Russia. I feel sure that in this assembly there are some who are steeped in discontent with the miserable anarchy of the century of Commerce: to them I offer a means of renouncing their class by supporting Socialist propaganda in joining the Democratic Federation, which I have the honour of representing before you, and which I believe is the only body in this country which puts forward constructive Socialism as its programme.

This to my mind is opportunity enough for those of us who are discontented with the present state of things and long for an opportunity of renunciation; and it is very certain that in accepting the opportunity you will have at once to undergo some of the inconveniences of martyrdom, though without gaining its dignity at present. You will at least be mocked and laughed at by those whose mockery is a token of honour to an honest man; but you will, I don't doubt it,

be looked on coldly by many excellent people, not all of whom will be quite stupid. You will run the risk of losing position, reputation, money, friends even: losses which are certainly pin-pricks to the serious martyrdom I have spoken of, but which none the less do try the stuff a man is made of; all the more as he can escape them with little other reproach of cowardice than that which his own conscience cries out at him. Nor can I assure you that you will for ever escape scot-free from the attacks of open tyranny. It is true that at present capitalist society only looks on Socialism in England with dry grins. But remember that the body of people who have for instance ruined India, starved and gagged Ireland, and tortured Egypt, have capacities in them, some ominous signs of which they have lately shown, for openly playing the tyrants' game nearer home. So on all sides I can offer you a position which involves sacrifice; a position which will give you your America at home, and make you inwardly sure that you are at least of some use to the cause: and I earnestly beg you, those of you who are convinced of the justice of our cause, not to hang back from active participation in a struggle which, who ever helps or whoever abstains from helping, must beyond all doubt end at last in Victory!

TRUE AND FALSE SOCIETY

I HAVE been asked to give you the Socialist view of the Labour Question. Now in some ways that is a difficult matter to deal with—far beyond my individual capacities—and would also be a long business; yet in another way, as a matter of principle, it is not difficult to understand or long to tell of, and does not need previous study or acquaintance with the works of specialists or philosophers. Indeed, if it did, it would not be a political subject, and I hope to show you that it is pre-eminently political in the sense in which I should use the word; that is to say, it is a matter which concerns everyone, and has to do with the practical everyday relations of his life, and that not only as an individual, but as a member of a body corporate, nay, as a member of that great corporation—humanity. Thus considered, it would be hard indeed if it could not be understood readily by a person of ordinary intelligence who can bring his mind to bear upon it without prejudice. Such a person can learn the basis of the opinion in even an hour's talk, if the matter be clearly put before him. It is my task to attempt this; and whether I fail or succeed, I can at least promise you to use no technical phrases which would require explanation; nor will I, as far as I can help, go into any speculative matter, but will be as plain and practical as I can be.

Yet I must warn you that you may be disappointed when you find that I have no elaborate plan, no details of a new society to lay before you, that to my mind to attempt this would be putting before you a mere delusion. What I ask you to consider is in the main the clearing away of obstacles that stand in the way of the due and unwasteful use of labour—a task not light indeed, nor to be accomplished without the most strenuous effort in the teeth of violent resistance, but yet not impossible for humanity as we know it, and as I firmly believe not only necessary, but, as things now are, the one thing essential to be undertaken.

Now you all know that, taking mankind as a whole, it is

necessary for man to labour in order to live. Certainly not all things that we enjoy are the works of man's labour; the beauty of the earth, and the action of nature on our sensations, are always here for us to enjoy, but we can only do so on the terms of our keeping ourselves alive and in good case by means of labour, and no inventions can set aside that necessity. The merest savage has to pluck the berry from the tree, or dig up the root from the ground before he can enjoy his dog-like sleep in sun or shade; and there are no savages who have not got beyond that stage; while the progressive races of mankind have for many ages got a very long way beyond it, so that we have no record of any time when they had not formed some sort of society, whose aim was to make the struggle with Nature for subsistence less hard than it otherwise would have been, to win a more abundant livelihood from her.

We cannot deal at any length with the historical development of society; our object is simply to inquire into the constitution of that final development of society under which we live. But one may first ask a few questions:—1st, Since the community generally must labour in order that the individuals composing it may subsist, and labour harder in order that they may attain further advantages, ought not a really successful community so to arrange that labour that each capable person should do a fair share of it and no more? 2nd, Should not a really successful community—established surely for the benefit of all its members—arrange that everyone who did his due share of labour should have his due share of the wealth earned by that labour? 3rd, If any labour were wasted, such waste would throw an additional burden on those who produced what was necessary and pleasant to existence. Should not a successful community, therefore, so organize its labour that it should not be wasted? You must surely answer Yes to each of these three questions. I will assert, then, that a successful society—a society which fulfilled its true functions—would take care that each did his due share of labour, that each had his due share of wealth

resulting from that labour, and that the labour of persons generally was not wasted. I ask you to remember those three essentials of a successful society throughout all that follows; and to let me apply them now as a test of success to the society in which we live, the latest development of so many ages of the struggle with Nature, our elaborate and highly-organized civilization. True and False Society

In our society, does each capable person do his fair share of labour? Is his share of the wealth produced proportionate to his labour? Is the waste of labour avoided in our society?

You may perhaps hesitate in your answer to the third question; you cannot hesitate to say No to the two first. I think, however, I shall be able to show you that much labour is wasted, and that, therefore, our society fails in the three essentials necessary for a successful society. Our civilization, therefore, though elaborate and highly organized, is a failure; that is, supposing it to be the final development of society, as some people, nay, most people, suppose it to be.

Now a few words as to the course of events which have brought us to the society of the present day. In periods almost before the dawn of continuous history the early progressive races from which we are descended were divided into clans or families, who held their wealth, such as it was, in common within the clan, while all outside the clan was hostile, and wealth not belonging to the clan was looked upon as prize of war. There was consequently continual fighting of clan with clan, and at first all enemies taken in war were slain. But after a while, as man progressed and got defter with his hands, and learned how to make more effective tools, it began to be found out that, so working, each man could do more than merely sustain himself; and then some of the prisoners of war, instead of being slain on the field, were made slaves of; they had become valuable for work, like horses. Out of the work they produced their masters or owners gave them sustenance enough to live on, and took the rest for themselves. Time passed, and the complexity of society grew; the early barbarism passed through

many stages into the ancient civilizations of which Greece and Rome were the great representatives; but this civilization was still founded on slave-labour. Most of its wealth was created by men who could be sold in the market like cattle. But as the old civilizations began to decay, this slave-labour became unprofitable; the countries comprised in the Roman Empire were disturbed by constant war; the governments, both central and provincial, became mere tax-gathering machines, and grew so greedy that things became unbearable. Society became a mere pretext for tax-gathering, and fell to pieces, and chattel slavery fell with it, since under all these circumstances slaves were no longer valuable.

Then came another change. A new society was formed, partly out of the tribes of barbarians who had invaded the Roman Empire, and partly out of the fragments of that empire itself; the feudal system arose, bearing with it new ideas, which I have not time to deal with here and now. Suffice it to say that in its early days mere chattel slavery gave place to serfdom. Powerful men, privileged men, had not forgotten that men can produce more by a day's labour than will keep them alive for a day; so now they settled their labourers on certain portions of land, stocked their land with them, in fact, and on these lands they had leave to live as well as they might on the condition that they should work a certain part of their time on the land which belonged to their lords. The average condition of these serfs was better than that of the chattel slaves. They could not be bought and sold personally, they were a part of the manor on which they lived, and they had as a class a tendency to become tenants by various processes. In one way or another these serfs got gradually emancipated, and during a transitional period, lasting through the two last centuries of the Middle Ages, the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the labour classes were in a far better position than they had been before, and in some ways than they have been since; suffering more from spasmodic arbitrary violence than from chronic legal oppression. The transition from this period to our own days is one of the most

interesting chapters of history; but it is impossible for me to touch on it here. All I can say is that the emancipated serfs formed one of the elements that went to make up our present middle class, and that a new class of workers grew up beneath them: men who were not owned by anyone, who were bound by no legal ties to such and such a manor, who might earn what livelihood they could for themselves under certain conditions, which I will presently try to lay before you, and which are most important to be considered; for this new class of so-called free labourers has become our modern working class. True and False Society

Now it will be clear to you, surely, how much and how grievously both the classical period, with its chattel slavery, and the feudal system, with its serfdom, fell short of the society which we have set before us as reasonably successful. In each of them there was a class obviously freed from the necessity of labour by means of the degradation of another class which laboured excessively and reaped but a small reward for its excessive labour. Surely there was something radically wrong in these two societies. From the fact that labour is necessary for man's life on earth, and that Nature yields her abundance to labour only, one would be inclined to deduce the probability that he who worked most would be the best off. But in these slave and serf societies the reverse was the case: the man of leisureless toil lived miserably, the man who did nothing useful lived abundantly. Then, again, as to our third test, was there no waste of labour? Yes, indeed, there was waste most grievous. I have said that the slave-owner or the lord of the manor did nothing useful, and yet he did something; he was bound to do something, for he was often energetic, gifted, full of character; he made war ceaselessly, consuming thereby the wealth which his slaves or his serfs created, and forcing them to work the more grievously. Here was waste enough, and lack of organization of labour.

Well, all this people find no great difficulty in seeing, and few would like, publicly at least, to confess a regret for these

conditions of labour, although in private some men, less hypocritical or more logical than the bulk of reactionists, admit that they consider the society of cultivated men and chattel slaves the best possible for weak human nature. Yet though we can see what has been, we cannot so easily see what is; and I admit that it is especially hard for people in our civilization, with its general freedom from the ruder forms of violence, its orderly routine life, and, in short, all that tremendous organization whose very perfection of continuity prevents us from noticing it—I say it is hard for people under the quiet order and external stability of modern society to note that much the same thing is going on in the relations of employers to the employed as went on under the slave society of Athens or under the self-sustained baronage of the thirteenth century.

For I assert that with us, as with the older societies, those who work hardest fare the worst; those who produce the least get the most; while as to the waste of labour that goes on, the waste of times past is as nothing compared with what is wasted to-day.

I must now justify this view of mine, and, if possible, get you to agree with it by pointing out to you how society at the present day is constituted.

Now, as always, there are only two things essential to the production of wealth—labour, and raw material: everyone can labour who is not sick or in nonage, therefore everyone except those, if he can get at raw material, can produce wealth; but without that raw material he cannot produce anything—anything, that is, that man can live upon; and if he does not labour he must live at the cost of those that do; unless, therefore, everyone can get at the raw material and instruments of production, the community in general will be burdened by the expense of so many useless mouths, and the sum of its wealth will be less than it ought to be. But in our civilized society to-day the raw material and the instruments of production are monopolized by a comparatively small number of persons, who will not allow the general popula-

tion to use them for production of wealth unless they pay them tribute for doing so; and since they are able to exact this tribute, they themselves are able to live without producing, and consequently are a burden on society. Nor are these monopolists content with exacting a bare livelihood from the producers, as mere vagabonds and petty thieves do; they are able to get from the producers in all cases an abundant livelihood, including most of the enjoyments and advantages of civilization, and in many cases a position of such power that they are practically independent of the community and almost out of reach of its laws, although, indeed, the greater part of those laws were made for the purpose of upholding this monopoly; and wherever necessary they do now use the physical force which, by one means or another, they have under their control, for such upholding.

These monopolists, or capitalists, as one may call them broadly (for I will not at present distinguish the land capitalists from the money capitalists), are in much the same position as the slave-owners of ancient Greece and Rome, or the serf-masters of the thirteenth century; but they have this advantage over them, that though really they sustain their position by mere compulsion, just as the earlier masters did, that compulsion is not visible as the compulsion of the earlier times was; and it is very much their business to prevent it becoming visible, as may well be imagined. But as I am against monopoly and in favour of freedom, I must try to get you to see it, since seeing it is the first step towards feeling it, which, in its turn, is sure to lead to your refusing to bear it.

I have spoken of the tribute which the capitalists exact as the price of the use of those means of production which should be as free to all as the air we breathe is, since they are as necessary to our existence as it is: how do they exact the tribute? They are, to start with, in a good position, you see, because even without anyone's help they could use the labour-power in their own bodies on the raw material they have, and so earn their livelihood; but they are not contented

with that, as I hinted above—they are not likely to be, because their position, legalized and supported by the whole physical force of the State, enables them "to do better for themselves," as the phrase goes; they can use the labour-power of the disinherited, and force them to keep them without working for production. Those disinherited, however, they must keep alive to labour, and they must allow them also opportunity for breeding—these are necessities that pressed equally on the ancient slave-owner or the mediæval lord of the manor, or, indeed, that press on the owner of draught cattle; they must at least do for the workers as much as for a machine—supply them with fuel to enable them to work. Nor need they do more if they are dealing with men who have no power of resistance. But these machines are human ones, instinct with desires and passions, and therefore, they cannot help trying to better themselves; and they cannot better themselves except at the expense of the masters, because whatever they produce more than the bare necessaries of life the masters will at once take from them if they can; therefore they have always resisted the full exercise of the privilege of the masters, and have tried to raise their standard of livelihood above the mere subsistence limit. Their resistance has taken various forms, from peaceful strikes to open war, but it has always been going on, and the masters, when not driven into a corner, have often yielded to it, although unwillingly enough; but it must be said that mostly the workers have claimed little more than mere slaves would, who might mutiny for a bigger ration. For, in fact, this wage paid by our modern master is nothing more than the ration of the slave in another form; and when the masters have paid it, they are free to use all the rest that the workers produce, just as the slave-owner takes all that the slave produces. Remember at this point, therefore, that everything more than bare subsistence which the workers gain to-day they gain by carrying on constant war with their masters. I must add that their success in this war is often more apparent than real; that too often it means little more

than shifting the burden of extreme poverty from one group of workers to another; the unskilled labourers, of whom the supply is unlimited, do not gain by it, and their numbers have a tendency to increase, as the masters, driven to their shifts, use more elaborate machines in order to dispense with skilled labour, and also use the auxiliary labour of women and children, to whom they do *not* pay subsistence wages, thereby keeping down the wages of the head of the family, and depriving him and them of the mutual help and comfort in the household which would otherwise be gained from them.

Thus, then, the capitalists, by means of their monopoly of the means of production, compel the worker to work for less than his due share of the wealth which he produces—that is, for less than he produces. He must work, he will die else; and as they are in possession of the raw material, he must agree to the terms they enforce upon him. This is the "free contract" of which we hear so much, and which, to speak plainly, is a capitalist lie. There is no way out of this "freedom" save rebellion of some kind or other: strike-rebellion, which impoverishes the workers for the time, whether they win the strike or lose it; or the rebellion of open revolt, which will be put down always until it is organized for a complete change in the basis of society.

Now to show you another link or two of the chain which binds the workers. There is one thing which hampers this constant struggle of the workers towards bettering their condition at the expense of their masters, and that is competition for livelihood amongst them. I have told you that unskilled labour is practically unlimited; and machines, the employment of women and children, long hours of work, and all that cheapening of production so much bepraised now, bring about this state of things, that even in ordinary years there are more hands than there is work to give them. This is the great instrument of compulsion of modern monopoly; people undersell one another in our modern slave-market, so that the employers have no need to use any

visible instrument of compulsion in driving them towards work; and the invisibility of this whip, the fear of death by starvation, has so muddled people's brains that you can hear men, otherwise intelligent, *e.g.*, answering objections to the uselessness of some occupation by saying, "But you see it gives people employment," although they would see that if three of them had to dig a piece of ground, and one of them knocked off, and was "employed" in throwing chuckie stones into the water, the other two would have to do his share of the work as well as their own.

Another invisible link of the chain is this, that the workman does not really know his own master; the individual employer may be and often is on good terms with his men, and really unconscious of the war between them, although he cannot fail to know that if he pays more wages to his men than other employers in the same line of business as himself do, he will be beaten by them. But the workman's real master is not his immediate employer but his *class*, which will not allow even the best intentioned employer to treat his men otherwise than as profit-grinding machines. By his profit, made out of the unpaid labour of his men, the manufacturer must live, unless he gives up his position and learns to work like one of his own men, which indeed, as a rule, he could not do, as he has usually not been taught to do any useful work; therefore, as I have said, he must reduce his wages to the lowest point he can, since it is on the margin between his men's production and their wages that his profit depends; his class, therefore, compel his workmen to accept as little as possible. But further, the workman is a consumer as well as a producer, and in that character he has not only to pay rent to a landlord (and far heavier proportionately than rich people have to pay), and also a tribute to the middleman who lives without producing, and without doing service to the community, by passing money from one pocket to another; but he also has to pay (as consumer) the profits of the other manufacturers who superintend the production of the goods he uses. Again, as a mere member of society, a

should-be citizen, he has to pay taxes, and a great deal more than he thinks; he has to pay for wars, past, present, and future, that were and are never meant to benefit him, but to force markets for his masters, nay, to keep him from rebellion, from taking his own at some date; he has also to pay for the thousand and one idiocies of parliamentary government, and ridiculous monarchical and official state; for the mountain of precedent, nonsense, and chicanery with *its* set of officials, whose business it is under the name of law to prevent justice being done to any one. In short, in one way or another, when he has by dint of constant labour got his wages into his pocket, he has them taken away from him again by various occult methods, till it comes to this at last, that he really works an hour for one-third of an hour's pay, while the two-thirds go to those who have not produced the wealth which they consume.

Here, then, as to the first and second conditions of a reasonable society. 1st, That the labour should be duly apportioned. 2nd, That the wealth should be duly apportioned. Our society does not merely fail in them, but positively inverts them; with us those who consume most produce least; those who produce most consume least.

There yet remains something to be said on the third condition of a fair state of society, that it should look to it that labour be not wasted. How does civilization fare in that respect? I have told you that war was the occupation of the ancient slaveholders, set free by slave-labour from the necessity of producing; similarly, the mediæval baron, set free from the necessity of producing by the labour of the serfs, who tilled his lands for him, occupied himself with fighting for more serf-tilled land either for himself or his suzerain. In our own days we see that there is a class freed from the necessity of producing by the tribute paid by the wage-earner; what does *our* free class do, how does it occupy the life-long leisure which it forces toil to yield to it?

Well, it chiefly occupies itself in war like those earlier non-producing classes, and very busy it is over it. I know indeed

that there is a certain portion of the dominant class that does not pretend to do anything at all, except perhaps a little amateur reactionary legislation; yet even of that group I have heard that some of them are very busy in their estate offices trying to make the most of their special privilege, the monopoly of the land; and taking them altogether they are not a very large class. Of the rest some are busy in taxing us and repressing our liberties directly, as officers in the army and navy, magistrates, judges, barristers, and lawyers; they are the salaried officers on the part of the masters in the great class struggle. Other groups there are, as artists and literary men, doctors, schoolmasters, etc., who occupy a middle position between the producers and the non-producers; they are doing useful service, and ought to be doing it for the community at large, but practically they are only working for a class, and in their present position are little better than hangers-on of the non-producing class, from whom they receive a share of their privilege, together with a kind of contemptuous recognition of their position as gentlemen—heaven save the mark! But the great mass of the non-producing classes are certainly not idle in the ordinary sense of the word; they could not be, for they include men of great energy and force of character, who would, as all reasonable men do, insist on some serious or exciting occupation; and I say once again their occupation is war, though it is "writ large," and called competition. They are, it is true, called organizers of labour; and sometimes they do organize it, but when they do they expect an extra reward for so doing outside their special privilege. A great many of them, though they are engaged in the war, sit at home at ease and let their generals—their salaried managers, to wit—wage it for them. I am meaning here shareholders or sleeping partners; but whenever they are active in business they are really engaged in organizing the war with their competitors, the capitalists in the same line of business as themselves; and if they are to be successful in that war, they must not be sparing of destruction, either of their own or other people's goods; nay,

they not unseldom are prepared to further the war of sudden, as opposed to that of lingering death, and of late years they have involved pretty nearly the whole of Europe in attacks on barbarian or savage peoples, which are only distinguishable from sheer piracy by their being carried on by nations instead of individuals. But all that is only by the way; it is the ordinary and necessary outcome of their operations that there should be periodical slackness of trade following on times of inflation, from the fact that everyone tries to get as much as he can of the market to himself at the expense of everyone else, so that sooner or later the market is sure to be overstocked, so that wares are sold sometimes at less than the cost of production, which means that so much labour has been wasted on them by misdirection. Nor is that all; for they are obliged to keep an army of clerks and such like people, who are not necessary either for the production of goods or their distribution, but are employed in safe-guarding their masters' interests against their masters' competitors. The waste is further increased by the necessity of these organizers of the commercial war for playing on the ignorance and gullibility of the consumers by two processes, which in their perfection are specialities of the present century, and even, it may be said, of this latter half of it—to wit, adulteration and puffery. It would be hard to say how much ingenuity and painstaking have been wasted on these incidents in the war of commerce, and I am wholly unable to get any statistics of them: but we all know that an enormous amount of labour is spent on them, which is at the very best as much wasted as if those engaged on them were employed in digging a hole and filling it up again.

But further; there is yet another source of waste involved in our present society. The grossly unequal distribution of wealth forces the rich to get rid of their surplus money by means of various forms of folly and luxury, which means further waste of labour. Do not think I am advocating asceticism. I wish us all to make the utmost of what we can obtain from Nature to make us happier and more contented

while we live; but apart from reasonable comfort and real refinement, there is, as I am sure no one can deny, a vast amount of sham wealth and sham service created by our miserable system of rich and poor, which makes no human being the happier, on the one hand, while on the other it withdraws vast numbers of workers from the production of real utilities, and so casts a heavy additional burden of labour on those who are producing them. I have been speaking hitherto of a producing and a non-producing class, but I have been quite conscious all the time that though the first class produces whatever wealth is created, a very great portion of it is prevented from producing wealth at all, and being set to nothing better than turning a wheel that grinds nothing—save the workers' lives. Nay, worse than nothing. I hold that this sham wealth is not merely a negative evil (I mean in itself), but a positive one. It seems to me that the refined society of to-day is distinguished from all others by a kind of gloomy cowardice—a stolid but timorous incapacity of enjoyment. He who runs may read the record of the unhappy rich not less than that of the unhappy poor in the futility of their amusements, and the degradation of their art and literature.

Well, then, the third condition of a reasonable society is violated by our present so called society; the tremendous activity, energy, and invention of modern times is to a great extent wasted; the monopolists force the workers to waste a great part of their labour-power, while they waste almost the whole of theirs. Our society, therefore, does not fulfil the true functions of society. Now, the constitution of all society requires that each individual member of it should yield up a part of his liberty in return for the advantages of mutual help and defence; yet at bottom that surrender should be part of the liberty itself; it should be voluntary in essence. But if society does not fulfil its duties towards the individual, it wrongs him, and no man voluntarily submits to wrong—nay, no man ought to. The society, therefore, that has violated the essential conditions of its existence

must be sustained by *mere* brute force, and that is the case with our modern society no less than that of the ancient slave-holding and the mediæval serf-holding societies. As a practical deduction, I ask you to agree with me that such a society should be changed from its base up, if it be possible. And further, I must ask how, by what, and by whom, such a revolution can be accomplished? But before I set myself to deal with these questions, I will ask you to believe that though I have tried to argue the matter on first principles, I do not approach the subject from a pedantic point of view. If I could believe that, however wrong it may be in theory, our present system works well in practice, I should be silenced. If I thought that its wrongs and anomalies were so capable of palliation that people generally were not only contented, but were capable of developing their human faculties duly under it, and that we were on the road to progress without a great change, I for one would not ask anyone to meddle with it. But I do not believe that, nor do I know of any thoughtful person that does. In thoughtful persons I can see but two attitudes; on the one hand, the despair of pessimism, which I admit is common, and on the other a desire and hope of change. Indeed, in years like these few last, when one hears on all sides and from all classes of what people call depression of trade, which, as we too well know, means misery at least as great as that which a big war bears with it, and when on all sides there is ominous grumbling of the coming storm, the workers unable to bear the extra burden laid upon them by the "bad times,"—in such years there is, I do not say no hope, but at least no hope except in those changes, the tokens of which are all around us.

True and False Society

Therefore, again I ask how, or by what, or by whom, the necessary revolution can be brought about? What I have been saying hitherto has been intended to show you that there has always been a great class struggle going on which is still sustained by our class of monopoly and our class of disinheritance. It is true that in former times no sooner was one

form of that class struggle over than another took its place; but in our days it has become much simplified, and has cleared itself by progress through its various stages of mere accidental circumstances. The struggle for political equality has come to an end, or nearly so; all men are (by a fiction it is true) declared to be equal before the law, and compulsion to labour for another's benefit has taken the simple form of the power of the possessor of money, who is all powerful; therefore, if, as we Socialists believe, it is certain that the class struggle must one day come to an end, we are so much nearer to that end by the passing through of some of its necessary stages; history never returns on itself.

Now, you must not suppose, therefore, that the revolutionary struggle of to-day, though it may be accompanied (and necessarily) by violent insurrection, is paralleled by the insurrections of past times. A rising of the slaves of the ancient period, or of the serfs of the mediæval times, could not have been permanently successful, because the time was not ripe for such success, since the growth of the new order of things was not sufficiently developed. It is indeed a terrible thought that, although the burden of injustice and suffering was almost too heavy to be borne in such insurrectionary times, and although all popular uprisings have right on their side, they could not be successful at the time, because there was nothing to put in the place of the unjust system against which men were revolting. And yet it is true, and it explains the fact that the class antagonism is generally more felt when the oppressed class is bettering its condition than when it is at its worst. The consciousness of oppression then takes the form of hope, and leads to action, and is indeed the token of the gradual formation of a new order of things underneath the old decaying order.

I told you that I was not prepared to give you any details of the arrangement of a new state of society; but I am prepared to state the principles on which it would be founded, and the recognition of which would make it easy for serious men to deal with the details of arrangement. Socialism

asserts that everyone should have free access to the means of production of wealth—the raw material and the stored-up force produced by labour; in other words, the land, plant, and stock of the community, which are now monopolized by certain privileged persons, who force others to pay for their use. This claim is founded on the principle which lies at the bottom of Socialism, that the right to the possession of wealth is conferred by the possessor having worked towards its production, and being able to use it for the satisfaction of his personal needs. The recognition of this right will be enough to guard against mere confusion and violence. The claim to property on any other grounds must lead to what is in plain terms robbery; which will be no less robbery because it is organized by a sham society, and must no less be supported by violence because it is carried on under the sanction of the law.

Let me put this with somewhat more of detail. No man has made the land of the country, nor can he use more than a small portion of it for his personal needs; no man has made more than a small portion of its fertility, nor can use personally more than a small part of the results of the labour of countless persons, living and dead, which has gone to produce that fertility. No man can build a factory with his own hands, or make the machinery in it, nor can he use it, except in combination with others. He may call it his, but he cannot make any use of it as his alone, unless he is able to compel other people to use it for his benefit; this he does not do personally, but our sham society has so organized itself that by its means he can compel this unpaid service from others. The magistrate, the judge, the policeman, and the soldier are the sword and pistol of this modern highwayman, and I may add that he is also furnished with what he can use as a mask under the name of morals and religion.

Now if these means of production, the land, plant, and stock, were really used for their primary uses, and not as means for extracting unpaid labour from others, they would be used by men working in combination with each other,

each of whom would receive his due share of the results of that combined labour; the only difficulty would then be what would be his due share, because it must be admitted on all hands that it is impossible to know how much each individual has contributed towards the production of a piece of co-operative labour. But the principle once granted that each man should have his due share of what he has created by his labour, the solution of the difficulty would be attempted, nay, is now hypothetically attempted, in various ways—in two ways mainly. One view is that the State—that is, society organized for the production and distribution of wealth—would hold all the means of the production and distribution of wealth in its hands, allowing the use of them to whomsoever it thought could use them, charging rent, perhaps, for their use, but which rent would be used again only for the benefit of the whole community, and therefore would return to the worker in another form. It would also take on itself the organization of labour in detail, arranging the how, when, and where for the benefit of the public; doing all this, one must hope, with as little centralization as possible; in short, the State, according to this view, would be the only employer of labour. No individual would be able to employ a workman to work for him at a profit, *i.e.*, to work for less than the value of his labour (roughly estimated), because the State would pay him the full value of it; nor could any man let land or machinery at a profit, because the State would let it without the profit. It is clear that, if this could be carried out, no one could live without working. When a man had spent the wealth he had earned personally, he would have to work for more, as there would be no tribute coming to him from the labour of past generations. On those terms he could not accumulate wealth, nor would he desire to; for he could do nothing with it except satisfy his personal needs with it, whereas at present he can turn the superfluity of his wealth into capital, *i.e.*, wealth used for the extraction of profit. Thus society would be changed. Everyone would have to work for his livelihood,

and everybody would be able to do so, whereas at present there are people who refuse to work for their livelihood and forbid others to do so. Labour would not be wasted, as there would be no competing employers gambling in the market and using the real producer and the consumer as their milch cows. The limit of price would be the cost of production, so that buying and selling would be simply the exchange of equivalent values, and there would be no loss on either side in the transaction. Thus there would be a society in which everyone would have an equal chance for well-doing, for, as a matter of course, arrangements would be made for the sustaining of people in their nonage, for keeping them in comfort if they were physically incapacitated from working, and also for educating everyone according to his capacities. This would at the least be a society which would try to perform those functions of seeing that everyone did his due share of work and no more, and had his due share of wealth and no less, and that no labour was wasted, which I have said were the real functions of a true society.

But there is another view of the solution of the difficulty as to what constitutes the due share of the wealth created by labour. Those who take it say, since it is not really possible to find out what proportion of combined labour each man contributes, why profess to try to do so? In a properly ordered community, all work that is done is necessary on the one hand, and on the other there would be plenty of wealth in such a community to satisfy all reasonable needs. The community holds all wealth in common, but has the same right to holding wealth that the individual has, namely, the fact that it has created it and uses it; but as a community it can only use wealth by satisfying with it the needs of every one of its members—it is not a true community if it does less than this—but their needs are not necessarily determined by the kind or amount of work which each man does, though of course, when they are, that must be taken into account. To say the least of it, men's needs are much more equal than their mental or bodily capacities are: their ordinary needs,

granting similar conditions of climate and the like, are pretty much the same, and could, as above said, be easily satisfied. As for special needs for wealth of a more special kind, reasonable men would be contented to sacrifice the thing which they needed less for that which they needed more; and for the rest the varieties of temperament would get over the difficulties of this sort. As to the incentives to work, it must be remembered that even in our sham society most men are not disinclined to work, so only that their work is not that which they are compelled to do; and the higher and more intellectual the work is, the more men are resolved to do it, even in spite of obstacles. In fact, the ideas on the subject of the reward of labour in the future are founded on its position in the present. Life is such a terrible struggle for the majority that we are all apt to think that a specially gifted person should be endowed with more of that which we are all compelled to struggle for—money, to wit—and to value his services simply by that standard. But in a state of society in which all were well-to-do, how could you reward extra services to the community? Give your good worker immunity from work? The question carries with it the condemnation of the idea, and, moreover, that will be the last thing he will thank you for. Provide for his children? The fact that they are human beings with a capacity for work is enough; they are provided for in being members of a community which will see that they neither lack work nor wealth. Give him more wealth? Nay, what for? What can he do with more than he can use? He cannot eat three dinners a day, or sleep in four beds. Give him domination over other men? Nay, if he be more excellent than they are in any art, he must *influence* them for his good and theirs if they are worth anything; but if you make him their arbitrary master, he will govern them, but he will not influence them; he and they will be enemies, and harm each other mutually. One reward you can give him, that is, opportunity for developing his special capacity; but that you will do for everybody, and not the excellent only. Indeed, I sup-

pose he will not, if he be excellent, lack the admiration, or perhaps it is better to say the affection, of his fellow men, and he will be all the more likely to get that when the relations between him and them are no longer clouded by the fatal gift of mastership. True and False Society

Moreover, those who see this view of the new society believe that decentralization in it would have to be complete. The political unit with them is not a Nation, but a Commune; the whole of reasonable society would be a great federation of such communes, federated for definite purposes of the organization of livelihood and exchange. For a mere nation is the historical deduction from the ancient tribal family in which there was peace between the individuals composing it and war with the rest of the world. A nation is a body of people kept together for purposes of rivalry and war with other similar bodies, and when competition shall have given place to combination, the function of the nation will be gone.

I will recapitulate, then, the two views taken among Socialists as to the future of society. According to the first, the State—that is, the nation organized for unwasteful production and exchange of wealth—will be the sole possessor of the national plant and stock, the sole employer of labour, which she will so regulate in the general interest that no man will ever need to fear lack of employment and due earnings therefrom. Everybody will have an equal chance of livelihood, and, except as a rare disease, there would be no hoarding of money or other wealth. This view points to an attempt to give everybody the full worth of the productive work done by him, after having ensured the necessary preliminary that he shall always be free to work.

According to the other view, the centralized nation would give place to a federation of communities who would hold all wealth in common, and would use that wealth for satisfying the needs of each member, only exacting from each that he should do his best according to his capacity towards the production of the common wealth. Of course, it is to be

understood that each member is absolutely free to use his share of wealth as he pleases, without interference from any, so long as he really uses it, that is, does not turn it into an instrument for the oppression of others. This view intends complete equality of condition for everyone, though life would be, as always, varied by the differences of capacity and disposition; and emulation in working for the common good would supply the place of competition as an incentive.

These two views of the future of society are sometimes opposed to each other as Socialism and Communism, but to my mind the latter is simply the necessary development of the former, which implies a transition period, during which people would be getting rid of the habits of mind bred by the long ages of tyranny and commercial competition, and be learning that it is to the interest of each that all should thrive.

When men had lost the fear of each other engendered by our system of artificial famine, they would feel that the best way of avoiding the waste of labour would be to allow every man to take what he needed from the common store, since he would have no temptation or opportunity of doing anything with a greater portion than he really needed for his personal use. Thus would be minimized the danger of the community falling into bureaucracy, the multiplication of boards and offices, and all the paraphernalia of official authority, which is, after all, a burden, even when it is exercised by the delegation of the whole people and in accordance with their wishes.

Thus have I laid before you, necessarily briefly, a Socialist's view of the present condition of labour and its hopes for the future. If the indictment against the present society seem to you to be of undue proportions compared with the view of that which is to come, I must again remind you that we Socialists never dream of building up by our own efforts in one generation a society altogether anew. All I have been attacking has been the exercise of arbitrary authority for the supposed benefit of a privileged class. When we have got

rid of that authority and are free once more, we ourselves shall do whatever may be necessary in organizing the real society which even now exists under the authority which usurps that title. That true society of loved and lover, parent and child, friend and friend, the society of well-wishers, of reasonable people conscious of the aspirations of humanity and of the duties we owe to it through one another—this society, I say, is held together and exists by its own inherent right and reason, in spite of what is usually thought to be the cement of society, arbitrary authority to wit, that is to say, the expression of brute force under the influence of unreasoning habit. Unhappily though society exists, it is in an enslaved and miserable condition, because that same arbitrary authority says to us practically: "You may be happy if you can afford it, but, unless you have a certain amount of money you shall not be allowed the exercise of the social virtues: sentiment, affection, good manners, intelligence even, to you shall be mere words; you shall be less than men, because you are needed as machines to grind on in a system which has come upon us we scarce know how, and which compels us as well as you." This is the real, continuously-repeated proclamation of law and order to the most part of men who are under the burden of that hierarchy of compulsion which governs us under the usurped and false title of society, and which all true Socialists or supporters of real society are bound to do their best to get rid of, so as to leave us free to realize to the full that true society which means well-being and well-doing for one and all.

True and False Society

MONOPOLY. OR, HOW LABOUR IS ROBBED

I WANT you to consider the position of the working-classes generally at the present day: not to dwell on the progress that they may (or may not) have made within the last five hundred or the last fifty years; but to consider what their position is, relatively to the other classes of which our society is composed: and in doing so I wish to guard against any exaggeration as to the advantages of the position of the upper and middle-classes on the one side, and the disadvantages of the working-classes on the other; for in truth there is no need for exaggeration; the contrast between the two positions is sufficiently startling when all admissions have been made that can be made. After all, one need not go further than the simple statement of these few words: *The workers are in an inferior position to that of the non-workers.*

When we come to consider that everyone admits nowadays that labour is the source of wealth—or, to put it in another way, that it is a law of nature for man generally, that he must labour in order to live—we must all of us come to the conclusion that this fact, that the workers' standard of livelihood is lower than that of the non-workers, is a startling fact. But startling as it is, it may perhaps help out the imaginations of some of us—at all events of the well-to-do, if I dwell a little on the details of this disgrace, and say plainly what it means.

To begin, then, with the foundation; the workers eat inferior food and are clad in inferior clothes to those of the non-workers. This is true of the whole class: but a great portion of it are so ill-fed that they not only live on coarser or nastier victuals than the non-producers, but have not enough, even of these, to duly keep up their vitality; so that they suffer from the diseases and the early death which come of semi-starvation: or why say *semi*-starvation? let us say plainly that most of the workers are starved to death. As to their clothing, they are so ill-clad that the dirt and foulness of their clothes forms an integral part of their sub-

stance, and is useful in making them a defence against the weather; according to the ancient proverb, "Dirt and grease are the poor man's apparel."

Monopoly: or, How Labour is robbed

Again, the housing of the workers is proportionately much worse, so far as the better-off of them go, than their food or clothing. The best of their houses or apartments are not fit for human beings to live in, so crowded as they are. They would not be, even if one could step out of their doors into gardens or pleasant country, or handsome squares; but when one thinks of the wretched sordidness and closeness of the streets and alleys that they actually do form, one is almost forced to try to blunt one's sense of fitness and propriety, so miserable are they. As to the lodgings of the worse-off of our town workers, I must confess that I only know of them by rumour, and that I dare not face them personally; though I think my imagination will carry me a good way in picturing them to me. One thing, again, has always struck me much in passing through poor quarters of the town, and that is the noise and unrest of them, so confusing to all one's ideas and thoughts, and such a contrast to the dignified calm of the quarters of those who can afford such blessings.

Well! food, clothes, and housing—those are the three important items in the material condition of men, and I say flatly that the contrast between those of the non-producers and those of the producers is *horrible*, and that the word is no exaggeration. But is there a contrast in nothing else—education, now? Some of us are in the habit of boasting about our elementary education: perhaps it is good so far as it goes (and perhaps it isn't), but why doesn't it go further? Why is it elementary? In ordinary parlance, *elementary* is contrasted with *liberal* education. You know that in the class to which I belong, the professional or parasitical class, if a man cannot make some pretence to read a Latin book, and doesn't know a little French or German, he is very apt to keep it dark as something to be ashamed of, unless he has some real turn towards mathematics or the physical sciences

to cover his historical or classical ignorance; whereas if a working-man were to know a little Latin and a little French, he would be looked on as a very superior person, a kind of genius—which, considering the difficulties that surround him, he would be: inferiority again, you see, clear and plain.

But after all, it is not such scraps of ill-digested knowledge as this that give us the real test of the contrast; this lies rather in the taste for reading and the habit of it, and the capacity for the enjoyment of refined thought and the expression of it, which the more expensive class really has (in spite of the disgraceful sloppiness of *its* education), and which unhappily the working or un-expensive class lacks. The immediate reason for that lack, I know well enough, and that forms another item of contrast: it is the combined leisure and elbow-room which the expensive class considers its birthright, and without which, education, as I have often had to say, is a mere mockery; and which leisure and elbow-room the working class lacks, and even "social reformers" expect them to be contented with that lack. Of course, you understand that in speaking of this item I am thinking of the well-to-do artisan, and not the squalid, hustled-about, misery-blinded and hopeless wretch of the fringe of labour —*i.e.*, the greater part of labour.

Just consider the contrast in the mere matter of holidays. Leisure again! If a professional man (like myself, for instance) does a little more than his due daily grind—dear me, the fuss his friends make of him! how they are always urging him not to overdo it, and to consider his precious health, and the necessity of rest and so forth! and you know the very same persons, if they found some artisan in their employment looking towards a holiday, how sourly they would treat his longings for *rest*, how they would call him (perhaps not to his face) sot and sluggard and the like; and if he has it, he has got to take it against both his purse and his conscience; whereas in the professional class the yearly holiday is part of the payment for services. Once more, look at the different standard for the worker and the non-worker!

What can I say about popular amusements that would not so offend you that you would refuse to listen to me? Well, I must say something at any cost—viz., that few things sadden me so much as the amusements which are thought good enough for the workers; such a miserable killing—yea, murder—of the little scraps of their scanty leisure time as they are. Though, indeed, if you say that there is not so much contrast here between the workers' public amusements and those provided for the middle classes, I must admit it, with this explanation, that owing to the nature of the case, the necessarily social or co-operative method of the getting up and acceptation of such amusements, the lower standard has pulled down the whole of our public amusements; has made, for instance, our theatrical entertainments the very lowest expression of the art of acting which the world has yet seen.

Or again, a cognate subject, the condition of the English language at present. How often I have it said to me, You must not write in a literary style if you wish the working classes to understand you. Now at first sight that seems as if the worker were in rather the better position in this matter; because the English of our drawing-rooms and leading articles is a wretched mongrel jargon that can scarcely be called English, or indeed language; and one would have expected, *a priori*, that what the workers needed from a man speaking to them was plain English: but alas! 'tis just the contrary. I am told on all hands that my language is too simple to be understood by working-men; that if I wish them to understand me I must use an inferior quality of the newspaper jargon, the language (so called) of critics and "superior persons"; and I am almost driven to believe this when I notice the kind of English used by candidates at election time, and by political men generally—though of course this is complicated by the fact that these gentlemen by no means want to make the meaning of their words too clear.

Well, I want to keep as sternly as possible to the point

that I started from—viz., that there is a contrast between the position of the working-classes and that of the easily-living classes, and that the former are in an inferior position in all ways. And here, at least, we find the so-called friends of the working-classes telling us that the producers are in such a miserable condition that, if they are to understand our agitation, we must talk *down* to their slavish condition, not straightforwardly to them as friends and neighbours—as *men*, in short. Such advice I neither can nor will take; but that this should be thought necessary shows that, in spite of all hypocrisy, the master-class know well enough that those whom they "employ" are their slaves.

To be short, then, the working-classes are, relatively to the upper and middle-classes, in a degraded condition, and if their condition could be much raised from what it is now, even if their wages were doubled and their work-time halved, they would still be in a degraded condition, so long as they were in a position of inferiority to another class—so long as they were dependent on them—unless it turned out to be a law of nature that the making of useful things necessarily brought with it such inferiority!

Now, once again, I ask you very seriously to consider what that means, and you will, after consideration, see clearly that it must have to do with the way in which industry is organized amongst us, and the brute force which supports that organization. It is clearly no matter of race; the highest noble in the land is of the same blood, for all he can tell, as the clerk in his estate office, or his gardener's boy. The grandson or even the son of the "self-made man" may be just as refined—and also quite as unenergetic and stupid—as the man with twenty generations of titled fools at his back. Neither will it do to say, as some do, that it is a matter of individual talent or energy. He who says this, practically asserts that the whole of the working-classes are composed of men who individually do not rise above a lowish average, and that all of the middle-class men rise above it; and I don't think any one will be found who will support such a proposi-

tion, who is himself not manifestly below even that lowish average. No! you will, when you think of this contrast between the position of the producing and the non-producing classes, be forced to admit first that it is an evil, and secondly that it is caused by artificial regulations; by customs that can be turned into more reasonable paths; by laws of man that can be abolished, leaving us free to work and live as the laws of nature would have us. And when you have come to those two conclusions, you will then have either to accept Socialism as the basis for a new order of things, or to find some better basis than that; but you will not be able to accept the present basis of society unless you are prepared to say that you will not seek a remedy for an evil which you know can be remedied. Let me put the position once more as clearly as I can, and then let us see what the remedy is.

Monopoly: or, How Labour is robbed

Society to-day is divided into classes, those who render services to the public and those who do not. Those who render services to the community are in an inferior position to those who do not, though there are various degrees of inferiority amongst them, from a position worse than that of a savage in a good climate to one not much below that of the lower degree of the unserviceable class; but the general rule is, that the more undeniably useful a man's services are, the worse his position is; as, for example, the agricultural labourers who raise our most absolute necessaries are the most poverty-stricken of all our slaves.

The individuals of this inferior or serviceable class, however, are not deprived of a hope. That hope is, that if they are successful they may become unserviceable; in which case they will be rewarded by a position of ease, comfort, and respect, and may leave this position as an inheritance to their children. The preachers of the unserviceable class (which rules all society) are very eloquent in urging the realization of this hope, as a pious duty, on the members of the serviceable class. They say, amidst various degrees of rigmarole: "My friends, thrift and industry are the greatest of the virtues; exercise them to the uttermost, and you will be re-

warded by a position which will enable you to throw thrift and industry to the winds."

However, it is clear that this doctrine would not be preached by the unserviceable if it could be widely practised, because the result would then be that the serviceable class would tend to grow less and less and the world be undone; there would be nobody to make things. In short, I must say of this hope, "What is that among so many?" Still it is a phantom which has its uses—to the unserviceable.

Now this arrangement of society appears to me to be a mistake (since I don't want to use strong language)—so much a mistake, that even if it could be shown to be irremediable, I should still say that every honest man must needs be a rebel against it; that those only could be contented with it who were, on the one hand, dishonest tyrants interested in its continuance; or, on the other hand, the cowardly and helpless slaves of tyrants—and both contemptible. Such a world, if it cannot be mended, needs no hell to supplement it.

But, you see, all people really admit that it can be remedied; only some don't want it to be, because they live easily and thoughtlessly in it and by means of it; and others are so hard-worked and miserable that they have no time to think and no heart to hope, and yet I tell you that if there were nothing between these two sets of people it would be remedied: even then should we have a new world. But judge you with what wreck and ruin, what fire and blood, its birth would be accompanied!

Argument, and appeals to think about these matters, and consciously help to bring a better world to birth, must be addressed to those who lie between these two dreadful products of our system, the blind tyrant and his blind slave. I appeal, therefore, to those of the unserviceable class who are ashamed of their position, who are learning to understand the crime of living without producing, and would be serviceable if they could; and, on the other hand, to those of the serviceable class who by luck maybe, or rather maybe by determination,

by sacrifice of what small leisure or pleasure our system has left them, are able to think about their position and are intelligently discontented with it.

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To all these I say: You well know that there must be a remedy to the present state of things. For Nature bids all men to work in order to live, and that command can only be evaded by a man or a class forcing others to work for it in its stead; and, as a matter of fact, it is the few that compel and the many that are compelled; as indeed the most must work, or the work of the world couldn't go on. Here, then, is your remedy within sight surely; for why should the many allow the few to compel them to do what Nature does herself compel them to do? It is only by means of superstition and ignorance that they can do so; for observe that the existence of a superior class living on an inferior implies that there is a constant struggle going on between them; whatever the inferior class can do to better itself at the expense of the superior it both can and must do, just as a plant must needs grow towards the light; but its aim must be proportionate to its freedom from prejudice and its knowledge. If it is ignorant and prejudiced it will aim at some mere amelioration of its slavery; when it ceases to be ignorant, it will strive to throw off its slavery once for all.

Now, I may assume that the divine appointment of misery and degradation as accompaniments of labour is an exploded superstition among the workers; and, furthermore, that the recognition of the duty of the working-man to raise his class, apart from his own individual advancement, is spreading wider and wider amongst the workers. I assume that most workmen are conscious of the inferior position of their class, although they are not and cannot be fully conscious of the extent of the loss which they and the whole world suffer as a consequence, since they cannot see and feel the better life they have not lived. But before they set out to seek a remedy they must add to this knowledge of their position and discontent with it, a knowledge of the means whereby they are kept in that position in their own despite; and that know-

ledge it is for us Socialists to give them, and when they have learned it then the change will come.

One can surely imagine the workman saying to himself, "Here am I, a useful person in the community, a carpenter, a smith, a compositor, a weaver, a miner, a ploughman, or what not, and yet, as long as I work thus and am useful, I belong to the lower class, and am not respected like yonder squire or lord's son who does nothing, yonder gentleman who receives his quarterly dividends, yonder lawyer or soldier who does worse than nothing, or yonder manufacturer, as he calls himself, who pays his managers and foremen to do the work he pretends to do; and in all ways I live worse than he does, and yet I *do* and he lives on my *doings*. And furthermore, I know that not only do I know my share of my work, but I know that if I were to combine with my fellow-workmen, we between us could carry on our business and earn a good livelihood by it without the help (?) of the squire's partridge-shooting, the gentleman's dividend-drawing, the lawyer's chicanery, the soldier's stupidity, or the manufacturer's quarrel with his brother manufacturer. Why, then, am I in an inferior position to the man who does nothing useful, and whom, therefore, it is clear that I *keep?* He says he *is* useful to me, but I know I am useful to him or he would not 'employ' me, and I don't perceive his utility. How would it be if I were to leave him severely alone to try the experiment of living on his usefulness, while I lived on mine and worked *with* those that are useful *for* those that are useful? Why can't I do this?"

My friend, because since you live by your labour, you are not free. And if you ask me, Who is my master? who owns me? I answer *Monopoly*. Get rid of Monopoly, and you will have overthrown your present tyrant, and will be able to live as you please, within the limits which Nature prescribed to you while she was your master, but which limits you, as man, have enlarged so enormously by almost making her your servant.

And now, what are we to understand by the word Mon-

opoly? I have seen it defined as the selling of wares at an enhanced price without the seller having added any additional value to them; which may be put again in this way, the habit of receiving reward for services never performed or intended to be performed—for imaginary services, in short.

Monopoly: or, How Labour is robbed

This definition would come to this, that Monopolist is *cheat* writ large; but there is an element lacking in this definition which we must presently supply. We can defend ourselves against this cheat by using our wits to find out that his services are imaginary, and then refusing to deal with him; his instrument is fraud only. I should extend the definition of the Monopolist by saying that he was one who was *privileged* to *compel* us to pay for imaginary services. He is, therefore, a more injurious person than a mere cheat, against whom we can take precautions, because his instrument for depriving us of what we have earned is no longer mere fraud, but fraud with *violence* to fall back on. So long as his privilege lasts we have no defence against him; if we want to do business in his line of things, we must pay him the toll which his privilege allows him to claim of us, or else abstain from the article we want to buy. If, for example, there were a Monopoly of champagne, silk velvet, kid gloves, or dolls' eyes, when you wanted any of those articles you would have to pay the toll of the Monopolist, which would certainly be as much as he could get, besides their cost of production and distribution; and I imagine that if any such Monopoly were to come to light in these days, there would be a tremendous to-do about it, both in and out of Parliament. Nevertheless, there is little to-do about the fact that all society to-day is in the grasp of *Monopoly*. Monopoly is our master, and we do not know it.

For the privilege of our Monopolists does not enable them merely to lay a toll on a few matters of luxury or curiosity which people can do without. I have stated, and you must admit, that everyone must labour who would live, unless he is able to get somebody to do his share of labour for him—to be somebody's pensioner in fact. But most people cannot

be the pensioners of others; therefore, they have to labour to supply their wants; but in order to labour usefully two matters are required: 1st, The bodily and mental powers of a human being, developed by training, habit and tradition; and 2nd, Raw material on which to exercise those powers, and tools wherewith to aid them. The second matters are absolutely necessary to the first; unless the two come together, no commodity can be produced. Those, therefore, that must labour in order to live, and who have to ask leave of others for the use of the instruments of labour, are not free men but the dependents of others, *i.e.*, their slaves; for, the commodity which they have to buy of the monopolists is no less than life itself.

Now, I ask you to conceive of a society in which all sound and sane persons can produce by their labour on raw materials, aided by fitting tools, a due and comfortable livelihood, and which possesses a sufficiency of raw material and tools. Would you think it unreasonable or unjust, that such community should insist on every sane and sound person working to produce wealth, in order that he might not burden the community; or, on the other hand, that it should insure a comfortable livelihood to every person who worked honestly for that livelihood, a livelihood in which nothing was lacking that was necessary to his development as a healthy human animal, with all its strange complexity of intellectual and moral habits and aspirations?

Now, further, as to the raw material and tools of the community, which, mind you, are necessary to its existence: would you think it unreasonable, if the community should insist that these precious necessaries, things without which it could not live, should be *used* and not *abused?* Now, raw material and tools can only be *used* for the production of useful things; a piece of tillage, for instance, is not used by sowing it with thistles and dock and dodder, nor a bale of wool by burning it under your neighbour's window to annoy him; this is abuse, not use, of all these things, and I say that our community will be right in forbidding such abuse.

Again, would it be unreasonable for the community to say that these means of production, if they are to be used and not abused, must be used by those who *can* use them, that is, by all the sane and sound persons engaged in earning their livelihood in concert; that they are to be so used according to fair and natural regulations agreed upon by the whole community in its sane mind; and that, furthermore, since they are to be used by all, they must not be exclusively possessed, *i.e.*, *owned* by any; because, if any private persons, or groups of such, held the exclusive possession or ownership of them, they could withhold the use of them from those who could use them, except on terms which would place the useful persons in a position of inferiority to the useless; in other words they would be their masters, and would impose such a life on them as they chose. Therefore, I say, those raw materials and tools would be the property of the whole community, and would be used by every one in it, on the terms that they should repair the waste in them and not engross undue shares of them.

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Here, then, is our reasonable community, in which all can produce, all do produce, no one has to pay poll-tax to be allowed to work, that is to live; in which no man need be badly off, unless by his own will; a society whose aim it is to make the most of its natural conditions and surroundings for the benefit of each and all of its members. These people I call reasonable men; but they have been called by other names, as breakers of the eighth commandment (or of all the commandments in the lump), brigands, assassins, greedy pillagers, enemies of society—in a word Socialists.

Look at another society, and see if we like it better. In it, as in our first one, all sane and sound persons can produce wealth by their labour on raw material aided by tools; nor is there any lack of raw materials and tools in *this* society; yet there the resemblance ceases; for, one part of those who could do useful work will not, and consequently another part cannot; some of this second part can get no work to do, and are starved outright; others can get nothing but useless work to do, and thereby help to starve their brethren; and

all those who produce anything, as we have seen before, are in an inferior position to those who do not.

The law of nature, that livelihood follows labour, is thus reversed, since those who work hardest get least, and those who work least fare best. Is this reasonable? Yet it is the direct and necessary result of those rights of property which the whole of our army, navy, police, judges, lawyers, parsons, etc., are banded together to sustain, by whatever amount of fraud and violence may be necessary for its safeguarding. It is the result of monopoly; for now the field is no longer used only for its primary use, the growing of corn, the feeding of beasts, the building of a house upon it; it is also *abused* by being employed as a rent-squeezing machine for the supposed benefit of an individual; and the like is the case with the tools of labour; the stored up labour of past generations, the machinery, the means of transit, all these things are no longer used merely as means of production; that has now become their secondary use, which the law does not trouble itself with at all, since it has all its attention turned to its enforcing their abuse (now become their primary use) for the benefit of the owners; their abuse as instruments for squeezing rent, interest, and profit out of the producers.

Those that thus, according to the (middle-class) ten commandments, are so anxious to prevent what they call theft, are thus the masters—nay, the owners—of all society under our present system; outside them there is nothing whatever but machinery—metal, brutal, and human—for enabling them to produce, not the greatest amount of wealth, but the greatest amount of profit; and when the masters fall short in getting what they consider the due amount of profit produced by this said machinery, they say times are bad; even though the warehouses and granaries are full, and the power of producing wealth with decreasing labour is every day growing. High prices to them and also, unluckily, to their human machines, mean prosperity, because these latter are not in the least in the world rewarded for producing wealth for themselves, but for producing profits for their masters.

The destruction of wealth by war and other calamities is good for their profit-grinding, therefore we have war. The waste of labour in all kinds of stupidities and fatuities is good for trade, therefore we have sham literature, sham art, sham enjoyment, newspapers, advertisements, jubilees, and all kinds of disgraces, to help our failing system to totter on a little longer, so that our sons instead of ourselves may have to face the inevitable ruin which, on these terms, must bring about the peace to come.

What help is there out of it all? I have spoken of the workers as the helpless machinery of commerce; and helpless they are so long as they are apathetically accepting their position *as* mere machinery in the hands of the masters of society; and yet it is they who have to bring about the change, and sweep away monopoly. The capitalists for any radical change are far more helpless than they are; because, as capitalists, as a class, they cannot even conceive of any other means of living except as pensioners on others, and it is their accepted duty, nay, their religion, to resist all change in this direction; nor as individuals have they any means of earning their livelihood, if you take away their pensions before you have begun to reconstruct a new world in which they would find a place like other people; it is, therefore, impossible that the change can be made from above to below. No, it is the classes which are necessary to what of real society still hangs together behind the monstrous machinery of monopoly, it is the workers themselves that must bring about the change. And it is at least an incidental purpose of Socialist propaganda that the change should be, if possible, brought about or at least guided by the conscious intelligence of the workers, that it may not be left altogether to the blind forces of hunger, misery, and despair, which the capitalist system is so steadily piling up for its own overthrow. Apart from all the conscious politics, all the pushing this way and that, of semi-extinct Toryism and vague crude democracy, which is undoubtedly paving the way for revolution, the time is coming when the monopoly of the means

of production will lose its value, when the employers will begin to cease to employ. Cut-throat competition, ever cheapening means of production, and exhausting markets on one hand; on the other, the unceasing struggle of the workers to improve their condition at the expense of the capitalists, will make employment for profit more difficult both to get and to give; will, in fact, bring about deadlock and ruin in spite of occasional improvements in trade. But if the workers have learned to understand their position, which means if they have become determined to make the best of the nature which they have so far conquered, in despite of artificial restrictions on labour for the benefit of a class, they need not fear the coming crisis. That very increase in the productivity of labour, which will ruin capitalism, will make Socialism possible, and it cannot be doubted that the progress of the cheapening of production will be quickened prodigiously in the very first days of the new social order, and we shall all find it easy enough to live a very few years after the time when we found it so difficult to make profits.

Nevertheless, it would be disingenuous if I seemed to try to create the impression that the abolition of monopoly—of the artificial restrictions on production—would be plain sailing, that it would come quite peacefully and without strenuous effort of various kinds. Things now going on do not encourage one to think that; hypocrisy where the movement seems weak in power or limited in aim, unscrupulous and relentless repression where it seems threatening and well instructed; no real signs of privilege yielding a jot without compulsion. And you must remember that all our law and government, from Parliament to a County Court, has now got to be just an elaborate defence of that very monopoly which it is our business to clear away, though they by no means began with that. True it is, that if the whole class of workers could be convinced on one day or in one year of the necessity of abolishing monopoly, it would pass away like the clouds of night. But the necessities of the miserable, and

the aspirations of the intelligent, will outrun the slower process of gradual conversion, and the anti-monopolists will find themselves in a position in which they will be forced to try to get hold of the executive, in order to destroy it and thus metamorphose society, not in order to govern by it and as they are now governed; in other words, they will have to sweep away all the artificial restrictions that stand in the way of free labour, and they will have to *compel* this step by some means or other. Those who set before them this necessity will doubtless differ at present as to the means whereby this will be done; but they should at least agree, and will agree when the time comes for action, that any means that are means, and are not unhuman, are good to use.

I have, then, tried to point out to you that the producing or useful class are in an inferior position to the non-producing or useless class; that this is a reversal of the law of nature which bids all to labour in order to live: that this monstrosity is the necessary result of private persons being allowed to treat the matters that are necessary to the fructification of labour as their *property*, and to abuse them by employing them as mere means of compulsion on the worker to pay tribute for leave to live. I have asked you to learn to agree with us Socialists in thinking it necessary to abolish this monopoly, and to combine together for its abolition and the reconstruction of society on the basis of the freedom of labour and the abolition of all privilege. I must add further, that no programme is worthy the acceptance of the working-classes that stops short of the abolition of private property in the means of production. Any other programme is misleading and dishonest; it has two faces to it, one of which says to the working-man, "This is Socialism or the beginning of it" (which it is not), and the other says to the capitalist, "This is sham Socialism; if you can get the workers, or part of them, to accept this, it will create a new lower middle class, a buffer, to push in between Privilege and Socialism, and save you, if only for a while."

But this true programme, which means the abolition of privilege, is enough, for it must and will lead directly to full Socialism. It will draw the teeth of the dragon of capitalism, and make a society of equality possible; a society in which, instead of living among enemies in a state of things where there is nothing but a kind of armed truce between all men, we shall live among friends and neighbours, with whom indeed our passions or folly may sometimes make us quarrel, but whose interests cannot really be dissociated from our own.

THE SOCIALIST IDEAL. I. ART. WRITTEN FOR THE "NEW REVIEW," JANUARY 1891*

SOME people will perhaps not be prepared to hear that Socialism has any ideal of art, for in the first place it is so obviously founded on the necessity for dealing with the bare economy of life that many, and even some Socialists, can see nothing save that economic basis; and moreover, many who might be disposed to admit the necessity of an economic change in the direction of Socialism believe quite sincerely that art is fostered by the inequalities of condition which it is the first business of Socialism to do away with, and indeed that it cannot exist without them. Nevertheless, in the teeth of these opinions I assert first that Socialism is an all-embracing theory of life, and that as it has an ethic and a religion of its own, so also it has an æsthetic: so that to every one who wishes to study Socialism duly it is necessary to look on it from the æsthetic point of view. And, secondly, I assert that inequality of condition, whatever may have been the case in former ages of the world, has now become incompatible with the existence of a healthy art.

But before I go further I must explain that I use the word *art* in a wider sense than is commonly used amongst us today; for convenience sake, indeed, I will exclude all appeals to the intellect and emotions that are not addressed to the eyesight, though properly speaking, music and all literature that deals with style should be considered as portions of art; but I can exclude from consideration as a possible vehicle of art no production of man which can be looked at. And here at once becomes obvious the sundering of the ways between the Socialist and the commercial view of art. To the Socialist a house, a knife, a cup, a steam engine, or what not, anything, I repeat, that is made by man and has form, must either be a work of art or destructive to art. The Commercialist, on the other hand, divides "manufactured articles" into those which

*The other articles treating of the Socialist Ideal were: II. Politics, by G. Bernard Shaw; III. Literature, by H. S. Salt.

are prepensely works of art, and are offered for sale in the market as such, and those which have no pretence and could have no pretence to artistic qualities. The one side asserts indifference, the other denies it. The Commercialist sees that in the great mass of civilized human labour there is no pretence to art, and thinks that this is natural, inevitable, and on the whole desirable. The Socialist, on the contrary, sees in this obvious lack of art a *disease* peculiar to modern civilization and hurtful to humanity; and furthermore believes it to be a disease which can be remedied.

This disease and injury to humanity, also, he thinks is no trifling matter, but a grievous deduction from the happiness of man; for he knows that the all-pervading art of which I have been speaking, and to the possibility of which the Commercialist is blind, is *the expression of pleasure in the labour of production;* and that, since all persons who are not mere burdens on the community must produce, in some form or another, it follows that under our present system most *honest* men must lead unhappy lives, since their work, which is the most important part of their lives, is devoid of pleasure.

Or, to put it very bluntly and shortly, under the present state of society happiness is only possible to artists and thieves.

It will at once be seen from this statement how necessary it is for Socialists to consider the due relation of art to society; for it is their aim to realize a reasonable, logical, and stable society; and of the two groups above-named it must be said that the artists (using the word in its present narrow meaning) are few, and are too busy over their special work (small blame to them) to pay much heed to public matters; and that the thieves (of all classes) form a disturbing element in society.

Now, the Socialist not only sees this disease in the body politic, but also thinks that he knows the cause of it, and consequently can conceive of a remedy; and that all the more because the disease is in the main peculiar, as above-said, to modern civilization. Art was once the common possession of

the whole people; it was the rule in the Middle Ages that the produce of handicraft was beautiful. Doubtless, there were eyesores in the palmy days of mediæval art, but these were caused by destruction of wares, not as now by the making of them: it was the act of war and devastation that grieved the eye of the artist then; the sacked town, the burned village, the deserted fields. Ruin bore on its face the tokens of its essential hideousness; to-day, it is prosperity that is externally ugly.

The story of the Lancashire manufacturer who, coming back from Italy, that sad museum of the nations, rejoiced to see the smoke, with which he was poisoning the beauty of the earth, pouring out of his chimneys, gives us a genuine type of the active rich man of the Commercial Period, degraded into incapacity of even wishing for decent surroundings. In those past days the wounds of war were grievous indeed, but peace would bring back pleasure to men, and the hope of peace was at least conceivable; but now, peace can no longer help us and has no hope for us; the prosperity of the country, by whatever "leaps and bounds" it may advance, will but make everything more and more ugly about us; it will become more a definitely established axiom that the longing for beauty, the interest in history, the intelligence of the whole nation, shall be of no power to stop one rich man from injuring the whole nation to the full extent of his riches, that is, of his privilege of taxing other people; it will be proved to demonstration, at least to all lovers of beauty and a decent life, that private property is public robbery.

Nor, however much we may suffer from this if we happen to be artists, should we Socialists at least complain of it. For, in fact, the "peace" of Commercialism is not peace, but bitter war, and the ghastly waste of Lancashire and the ever-spreading squalor of London are at least object-lessons to teach us that this is so, that there is war in the land which quells all our efforts to live wholesomely and happily. The *necessity* of the time, I say, is to feed the commercial war which we are all of us waging in some way or another; if, while we

are doing this, we can manage, some of us, to adorn our lives with some little pleasure of the eyes, it is well, but it is no *necessity*, it is a luxury, the lack of which we must endure.

Thus, in this matter also does the artificial famine of inequality, felt in so many other ways, impoverish us despite of our riches; and we sit starving amidst our gold, the Midas of the ages.

Let me state bluntly a few facts about the present condition of the arts before I try to lay before my readers the definite Socialist ideal which I have been asked to state. It is necessary to do this because no ideal for the future can be conceived of unless we proceed by way of contrast; it is the desire to escape from the present failure which forces us into what are called "ideals"; in fact, they are mostly attempts by persons of strong hope to embody their discontent with the present.

It will scarcely be denied, I suppose, that at present art is only enjoyed, or indeed thought of, by comparatively a few persons, broadly speaking, by the rich and the parasites that minister to them directly. The poor can only afford to have what art is given to them in charity; which is of the inferior quality inherent in all such gifts—not worth picking up except by starving people.

Now, having eliminated the poor (that is, almost the whole mass of those that make anything that has *form*, which, as before-said, must either be helpful to life or destructive of it) as not sharing in art from any side, let us see how the rich, who do share in it to a certain extent, get on with it. But poorly, I think, although they are rich. By abstracting themselves from the general life of man that surrounds them, they can get some pleasure from a few works of art; whether they be part of the wreckage of times past, or produced by the individual labour, intelligence, and patience of a few men of genius of to-day fighting desperately against all the tendencies of the age. But they can do no more than surround themselves with a little circle of hot-house atmosphere of art

hopelessly at odds with the common air of day. A rich man may have a house full of pictures, and beautiful books, and furniture and so forth; but as soon as he steps out into the streets he is again in the midst of ugliness to which he must blunt his senses, or be miserable if he really cares about art. Even when he is in the country, amidst the beauty of trees and fields, he cannot prevent some neighbouring landowner making the landscape hideous with utilitarian agriculture; nay, it is almost certain that his own steward or agent will force him into doing the like on his own lands; he cannot even rescue his parish church from the hands of the restoring parson. He can go where he likes and do what he likes outside the realm of art, but there he is helpless. Why is this? Simply because the great mass of effective art, that which pervades all life, *must* be the result of the harmonious co-operation of neighbours. And a rich man has no neighbours —nothing but rivals and parasites.

Now the outcome of this is that though the educated classes (as we call them) have theoretically some share in art, or might have, as a matter of fact they have very little. Outside the circle of the artists themselves there are very few even of the educated classes who care about art. Art is kept alive by a small group of artists working in a spirit quite antagonistic to the spirit of the time; and they also suffer from the lack of co-operation which is an essential lack in the art of our epoch. They are limited, therefore, to the production of a few individualistic works, which are looked upon by almost everybody as curiosities to be examined, and not as pieces of beauty to be enjoyed. Nor have they any position or power of helping the public in general matters of taste (to use a somewhat ugly word). For example, in laying out all the parks and pleasure grounds which have lately been acquired for the public, as far as I know, no artist has been consulted; whereas they ought to have been laid out by a committee of artists; and I will venture to say that even a badly chosen committee (and it might easily be well chosen) would have

saved the public from most of the disasters which have resulted from handing them over to the tender mercies of the landscape gardener.

This, then, is the position of art in this epoch. It is helpless and crippled amidst the sea of utilitarian brutality. It cannot perform the most necessary functions: it cannot build a decent house, or ornament a book, or lay out a garden, or prevent the ladies of the time from dressing in a way that caricatures the body and degrades it. On the one hand it is cut off from the traditions of the past, on the other from the life of the present. It is the art of a clique and not of the people. The people are too poor to have any share of it.

As an artist I *know* this, because I can *see* it. As a Socialist I know that it can never be bettered as long as we are living in that special condition of inequality which is produced by the direct and intimate exploitation of the makers of wares, the workmen, at the hands of those who are not producers in any, even the widest, acceptation of the word.

The first point, therefore, in the Socialist ideal of art is that it should be common to the whole people; and this can only be the case if it comes to be recognized that art should be an integral part of all manufactured wares that have definite form and are intended for any endurance. In other words, instead of looking upon art as a luxury incidental to a certain privileged position, the Socialist claims art as a necessity of human life which society has no right to withhold from any one of the citizens; and he claims also that in order that this claim may be established people shall have every opportunity of taking to the work which each is best fitted for; not only that there may be the least possible waste of human effort, but also that that effort may be exercised pleasurably. For I must here repeat what I have often had to say, that the pleasurable exercise of our energies is at once the source of all art and the cause of all happiness: that is to say, it is the end of life. So that once again the society which does not give a due opportunity to all its members to exercise their energies pleasurably has forgotten the end of life, is

not fulfilling its functions, and therefore is a mere tyranny to be resisted at all points.

The Socialist Ideal

Furthermore, in the making of wares there should be some of the spirit of the handicraftsman, whether the goods be made by hand, or by a machine that helps the hand, or by one that supersedes it. Now the essential part of the spirit of the handicraftsman is the instinct for looking at the wares in themselves and their essential use as the object of his work. Their secondary uses, the exigencies of the market, are nothing to him; it does not matter to him whether the goods he makes are for the use of a slave or a king, his business is to make them as excellent as may be; if he does otherwise he is making wares for rogues to sell to fools, and he is himself a rogue by reason of his complicity. All this means that he is making the goods for *himself;* for his own pleasure in making them and using them. But to do this he requires reciprocity, or else he will be ill-found, except in the goods that he himself makes. His neighbours must make goods in the same spirit that he does; and each, being a good workman after his kind, will be ready to recognize excellence in the others, or to note defects; because the primary purpose of the goods, their *use* in fact, will never be lost sight of. Thus the market of neighbours, the interchange of mutual good services, will be established, and will take the place of the present gambling-market, and its bond-slave the modern factory system. But the working in this fashion, with the unforced and instinctive reciprocity of service, clearly implies the existence of something more than a mere gregarious collection of workmen. It implies a consciousness of the existence of a society of neighbours, that is of equals; of men who do indeed expect to be made use of by others, but only so far as the services they give are pleasing to themselves; so far as they are services the performance of which is necessary to their own well-being and happiness.

Now, as on the one hand I *know* that no worthy popular art can grow out of any other soil than this of freedom and mutual respect, so on the other I feel sure both that this

opportunity will be given to art and also that it will avail itself of it, and that, once again, nothing which is made by man will be ugly, but will have its due form, and its due ornament, will tell the tale of its making and the tale of its use, even where it tells no other tale. And this because when people once more take pleasure in their work, when the pleasure rises to a certain point, the expression of it will become irresistible, and that expression of pleasure is art, whatever form it may take. As to that form, do not let us trouble ourselves about it; remembering that after all the earliest art which we have record of is still art to us; that Homer is no more out of date than Browning; that the most scientifically-minded of people (I had almost said the most utilitarian), the ancient Greeks, are still thought to have produced good artists; that the most superstitious epoch of the world, the early Middle Ages, produced the freest art; though there is reason enough for that if I had time to go into it.

For in fact, considering the relation of the modern world to art, our business is now, and for long will be, not so much attempting to produce definite art, as rather clearing the ground to give art its opportunity. We have been such slaves to the modern practice of the unlimited manufacture of makeshifts for real wares, that we run a serious risk of destroying the very material of art; of making it necessary that men, in order to have any artistic perception, should be born blind, and should get their ideas of beauty from the hearsay of books. This degradation is surely the first thing which we should deal with; and certainly Socialists must deal with it at the first opportunity; *they* at least must see, however much others may shut their eyes: for they cannot help reflecting that to condemn a vast population to live in South Lancashire while art and education are being furthered in decent places, is like feasting within earshot of a patient on the rack.

Anyhow, the first step toward the fresh new-birth of art *must* interfere with the privilege of private persons to des-

troy the beauty of the earth for their private advantage, and thereby to rob the community. The day when some company of enemies of the community are forbidden, for example, to turn the fields of Kent into another collection of cinder heaps in order that they may extract wealth, unearned by them, from a mass of half-paid labourers; the day when some hitherto all powerful "pig-skin stuffed with money" is told that he shall not pull down some ancient building in order that he may force his fellow citizens to pay him additional rack-rent for land which is not his (save as the newly acquired watch of the highwayman is)—that day will be the beginning of the fresh new-birth of art in modern times.

But that day will also be one of the memorable days of Socialism; for this very privilege, which is but the privilege of the robber by force of arms, is just the thing which it is the aim and end of our present organization to uphold; and all the formidable executive at the back of it, army, police, law courts, presided over by the judge as representing the executive, is directed towards this one end—to take care that the richest shall rule, and shall have full licence to injure the commonwealth to the full extent of his riches.

COMMUNISM

WHILE I think that the hope of the new-birth of society is certainly growing, and that speedily, I must confess myself puzzled about the means toward that end which are mostly looked after now; and I am doubtful if some of the measures which are pressed, mostly, I think, with all honesty of purpose, and often with much ability, would, if gained, bring us any further on the direct road to a really new-born society, the only society which can be a new birth, a society of practical equality. Not to make any mystery about it, I mean that the great mass of what most non-Socialists at least consider at present to be Socialism, seems to me nothing more than a *machinery* of Socialism, which I think it probable that Socialism *must* use in its militant condition; and which I think it *may* use for some time after it is practically established; but does not seem to me to be of its essence. Doubtless there is good in the schemes for substituting business-like administration in the interests of the public for the old Whig muddle of *laissez faire* backed up by coercion and smoothed by abundant corruption, which, worked all of it in the interest of successful business men, was once thought such a wonderful invention, and which certainly was the very cement of society as it has existed since the death of feudalism. The London County Council, for instance, is not merely a more useful body for the administration of public business than the Metropolitan Board of Works was: it is instinct with a different spirit; and even its general *intention* to be of use to the citizens and to heed their wishes, has in it a promise of better days, and has already done something to raise the dignity of life in London amongst a certain part of the population, and down to certain classes. Again, who can quarrel with the attempts to relieve the sordidness of civilized town life by the public acquirement of parks and other open spaces, planting of trees, establishment of free libraries and the like? It is sensible and right for the public to push for the attainment of such

gains; but we all know very well that their advantages are very unequally distributed, that they are gains rather for certain portions of the middle-classes than for working people. Nay, this Socialist machinery may be used much further: it may gain higher wages and shorter working-hours for the working-men themselves: industries may be worked by municipalities for the benefit both of producers and consumers. Working-people's houses may be improved, and their management taken out of the hands of commercial speculators. More time might be insisted on for the education of children; and so on, and so on. In all this I freely admit a great gain, and am glad to see schemes tried which would lead to it. But great as the gain would be, the ultimate good of it, the amount of progressive force that might be in such things would, I think, depend on *how* such reforms were done—in what spirit; or rather what else was being done, while these were going on, which would make people long for equality of condition; which would give them faith in the possibility & workableness of Socialism; which would give them courage to strive for it and labour for it; and which would do this for a vast number of people, so that the due impetus might be gained for the sweeping away of all privilege. For we must not lose sight of the very obvious fact that these improvements in the life of the larger public can only be carried out at the expense of some portion of the freedom and fortunes of the proprietary classes. They are, when genuine, one and all attacks I say on the "liberty and property" of the non-working or useless classes, as some of those classes see clearly enough. And I admit that if the sum of them should become vast and deep reaching enough to give to the useful or working classes intelligence enough to conceive of a life of equality and co-operation; courage enough to accept it and to bring the necessary skill to bear on working it; and power enough to force its acceptance on the stupid and the interested, the war of classes would speedily end in the victory of the useful class, which would then become the new Society of Equality.

Com-
munism

Intelligence enough to conceive, courage enough to will, power enough to compel. If our ideas of a new Society are anything more than a dream, these three qualities must animate the due effective majority of the working-people; and then, I say, the thing will be done.

Intelligence, courage, power *enough*. Now that *enough* means a very great thing. The effective majority of the working people must I should think be something as great in numbers as an actual mechanical majority; because the non-working classes (with, mind you, their sworn slaves and parasites, men who can't live without them) are even numerically very strong, and are stronger still in holding in their hand the nine points of the law, possession to wit; and as soon as these begin to think there is any serious danger to their privilege—*i.e.*, their livelihood—they will be pretty much unanimous in defending it, and using all the power which they possess in doing so. The necessary majority therefore of intelligence, courage, and power is such a big thing to bring about, that it will take a long time to do so; and those who are working for this end must clearly not throw away time and strength by making more mistakes than they can possibly help in their efforts for the conversion of the working people to an ardent desire for a society of equality. The question then, it seems to me, about all those partial gains above mentioned, is not so much as to what advantage they may be to the public at large in the passing moment, or even to the working people, but rather what effect they will have towards converting the workers to an understanding of, and ardent desire for Socialism; true and complete Socialism I mean, what I should call Communism. For though making a great many poor people, or even a few, somewhat more comfortable than they are now, somewhat less miserable, let us say, is not in itself a light good; yet it would be a heavy evil, if it did anything towards dulling the efforts of the whole class of workers towards the winning of a real society of equals. And here again come in those doubts and the puzzlement I began by talking about.

For I want to know and to ask you to consider, how far the betterment of the working people might go and yet stop at last without having made any progress on the *direct* road to Communism. Whether in short the tremendous organization of civilized commercial society is not playing the cat and mouse game with us Socialists. Whether the Society of Inequality might not accept the quasi-socialist machinery above mentioned, and work it for the purpose of upholding that society in a somewhat shorn condition, maybe, but a safe one. That seems to me possible, and means the other side of the view: instead of the useless classes being swept away by the useful, the useless classes gaining some of the usefulness of the workers, and *so* safeguarding their privilege: the workers better treated, better organized, helping to govern themselves, but with no more pretence to equality with the rich, nor any more hope for it than they have now. But if this be possible, it will only be so on the grounds that the working people have ceased to desire real Socialism and are contented with some outside show of it joined to an increase in prosperity enough to satisfy the cravings of men who do not know what the pleasures of life might be if they treated their own capacities and the resources of nature reasonably with the intention and expectation of being happy. Of course also it could not be possible if there be, as we may well hope, an actual necessity for new development of society from out of our present conditions: but granting this necessity, the change may and will be exceedingly slow in coming if the working people do not show their sense of the necessity by being overtaken by a longing for the change and by expressing that longing. And moreover it will not only be slow in coming but also in that case it can only come through a period of great suffering and misery, by the ruin of our present civilization: and surely reasonable men must hope that if Socialism be necessary its advent shall both be speedy and shall be marked by the minimum of suffering and by ruin not quite complete. Therefore, I say, what we have to hope for is that the inevitable advance of the Society of

Communism

Equality will speedily make itself felt by the consciousness of its necessity being impressed upon the working people, and that they will consciously and not blindly strive for its realization. That in fact is what we mean by the education into Socialism of the working classes. And I believe that if this is impossible at present, if the working people refuse to take any interest in Socialism, if they practically reject it, we must accept that as a sign that the necessity for an essential change in society is so far distant, that we need scarcely trouble ourselves about it. This is the test: and for this reason it is so deadly serious for us to find out whether those democratic tendencies and the schemes of new administration they give birth to are really of use in educating the people into *direct* Socialism. If they are not, they are of use for nothing else; and we had best try if we can't make terms with intelligent Tories and benevolent Whigs, and beg them to unite their intelligence and benevolence, and govern us as kindly and wisely as they can, and to rob us in moderation only. But if they are of use, then in spite of their sordid and repellent details, and all the sickness of hope deferred that the use of such instruments assuredly brings us, let us use them as far as they will go, and refuse to be disappointed if they will not go very far: which means if they will not in a decade turn into a united host of heroes and sages a huge mass of men living under a system of society so intricate as to look on the surface like a mere chance-hap muddle, many millions of necessitous people, oppressed indeed, and sorely, not by obvious individual violence and ill-will, but by an economic system so far reaching, so deeply seated, that it may well seem like the operation of a natural law to men so uneducated that they have not even escaped the reflexion of the so-called education of their masters, but in addition to their other mishaps are saddled also with the superstitions and hypocrisies of the upper classes, with scarce a whit of the characteristic traditions of their own class to help them: an intellectual slavery which is a necessary accompaniment of their material slavery. That as a mass is

what revolutionists have got to deal with: such a mass indeed I think could and would be vivified by some spark of enthusiasm, some sudden hopeful impulse towards aggression, if the necessity for sudden change were close at hand. But is it? There are doubtless not a few in this room, myself perhaps amongst them (I say *perhaps* for one's old self is apt to grow dim to one)—some of us I say once believed in the inevitableness of a sudden and speedy change. That was no wonder with the new enlightenment of Socialism gilding the dulness of civilization for us. But if we must now take soberer views of our hopes, do not reproach us with that. Remember how hard other tyrannies have died, though to the economical oppression of them was added obvious violent individual oppression, which as I have said is lacking to the heavy tyranny of our times: and can we hope that it will be speedier in its ending than they? I say that the time is not now for the sudden kindling of the impulse of direct aggression amongst the mass of the workmen. But what then! are we to give up all hope of educating them into Socialism? Surely not. Let us use all means possible for drawing them into Socialism, so that they may at last find themselves in such a position that they understand themselves to be face to face with false society, themselves the only possible elements of true society.

So now I must say that I am driven to the conclusion that those measures I have been speaking of, like everything that under any reasonable form does tend towards Socialism (present conditions being understood) *are* of use toward the education of the great mass of the workers; that it is necessary in the present to give form to vague aspirations which are in the air about them, and to raise their aims above the mere businesslike work of the old trades unions of raising wages with the consent (however obtained) of the employers; of making the workers see other employers* than those who live on the profit wrung out of their labour.

* The public to wit, *i.e.*, the workers themselves in their other position of consumers.

I think that taking up such measures, directly tending towards Socialism, is necessary also in getting working people to raise their standard of livelihood so that they may claim more and yet more of the wealth produced by society, which as aforesaid they can only get at the expense of the non-producing classes who now rob them. Lastly, such measures, with all that goes towards getting them carried, will train them into organization and administration; and I hope that no one here will assert that they do not need such training, or that they are not at a huge disadvantage from the lack of it as compared with their masters who have been trained in these arts.

But this education by political and corporate action must, as I hinted above, be supplemented by instilling into the minds of the people a knowledge of the aims of Socialism, and a longing to bring about the complete change which will supplant civilization by communism. For the Social-democratic measures above mentioned are all of them either makeshift alleviations to help us through the present days of oppression, or means for landing us in the new country of equality. And there is a danger that they will be looked upon as ends in themselves. Nay it is certain that the greater number of those who are pushing for them will at the time be able to see no further than them, and will only recognize their temporary character when they have passed beyond them, and are claiming the next thing. But I must hope that we can instil into the mass of people some spirit of expectation, however vague, beyond the needs of the year; and I know that many who are on the road to Socialism will from the first and habitually look toward the realization of the society of equality, and try to realize it for themselves—I mean they will at least try to think what equality will turn out to be, and will long for it above all things. And I look to this spirit to vivify the striving for the mere machinery of Socialism; and I hope and believe that it will so spread as the machinery is attained that however much the old individualist spirit may try to make itself master of the corpo-

rate machinery, and try by means of the public to govern the public in the interests of the enemies of the public, it may be defeated. Communism

All this however is talking about the possible course of the Socialist movement; but since, as you have just heard, it seems to me necessary that in order to make any due use of Socialist machinery one should have some sort of idea as to the life which is to be the result of it, let me now take up the often told tale of what we mean by Communism or Socialism; for between complete Socialism and Communism there is no difference whatever in my mind. Communism is in fact the completion of Socialism: when that ceases to be militant and becomes triumphant, it will be Communism.

The Communist asserts in the first place that the resources of nature, mainly the land and those other things which can only be used for the reproduction of wealth and which are the effect of social work, should not be owned in severalty, but by the whole community for the benefit of the whole. That where this is not the case the owners of these means of production must of necessity be the masters of those who do not own a sufficiency of them to free them from the need of paying with a portion of their labour for the use of the said means of production; and that the masters or owners of the means of production do practically own the workers; very practically, since they really dictate to them the kind of life they shall lead, and the workers cannot escape from it unless by themselves becoming owners of the means of production, *i.e.* of other men. The resources of nature therefore, and the wealth used for the production of further wealth, the plant and stock in short, should be communized. Now if that were done, it would at once check the accumulation of riches. No man can become immensely rich by the storing up of wealth which is the result of the labour of his own brain and hands: to become very rich he must by cajolery or force deprive others of what their brains or hands have earned for them: the utmost that the most acquisitive man could do would be to induce his fellow citizens to pay

him extra for his special talents, if they specially longed for his productions. But since no one could be very rich, and since talent for special work is never so very rare, and would tend to become less rare as men were freer to choose the occupations most suitable for them, producers of specialities could not exact *very* exorbitant payment, so that the aristocracy of talent, even if it appeared, would tend to disappear, even in this first state of incomplete Communism. In short there would be no very rich men: and all would be well off: all would be far above the condition of satisfaction of their material necessities. You may say how do I know that? The answer is because there could not be so much waste as there is now. Waste would tend to disappear. For what is waste? First, the causeless destruction of raw material; and secondly, the diverting of labour from useful production. You may ask me what is the standard of usefulness in wares? It has been said, and I suppose the common view of that point is, that the price in the market gives us the standard; but is a loaf of bread or a saw less useful than a Mechlin lace veil or a diamond necklace? The truth is that in a society of inequality, a society in which there are very rich people and very poor ones, the standard of usefulness is utterly confused: in such a society the market price of an article is given us by the necessities of the poor and the inordinate cravings of the rich; or rather indeed *their* necessity for spending their wealth—or rather their riches—somehow: by no means necessarily in pleasure. But in a society of equality the demand for an article *would* be a standard of its usefulness in one way or other. And it would be a matter of course that until everybody had his absolute necessities and his reasonable comforts satisfied, there would be no place for the production of luxuries; and always labour would be employed in producing things that people (all the people, since classes would have disappeared) really want.

Remember what the waste of a society of inequality is: 1st: The production of sordid makeshifts for the supply of poor folk who cannot afford the real article. 2nd: the pro-

duction of luxuries for rich folk, the greater part of which even their personal folly does not make them want. And 3rdly: the wealth wasted by the salesmanship of competitive commerce, to which the production of wares is but a secondary object, its first object being the production of a profit for the individual manufacturer. You understand that the necessary distribution of goods is not included in this waste; but the endeavour of each manufacturer to get as near as he can to a monopoly of the market which he supplies. Communism

The minimization of waste therefore, which would take place in the incomplete first stages of a society of equality—a society only *tending* to equality—would make us wealthy: labour would not be wasted: workmen would not be employed in producing either slave-wares, or toys for rich men: their genuine well made wares would be made for other workmen who would know what they wanted. When the wares were of such a kind as required very exquisite skill and long training to produce, or when the material used was far fetched and dear bought, they would not cease to be produced, even though private citizens could not acquire them: they would be produced for the public use, and their real value be enormously increased thereby, and the natural and honest pride of the workman duly satisfied. For surely wealthy people will not put up with sordid surrounding or stinginess in public institutions: they will assuredly have schools, libraries, museums, parks and all the rest of it real and genuine, not makeshifts for such things: especially as being no longer oppressed by fears for their livelihood, and all the dismal incidents of the battle for mere existence, they will be able to enjoy these things thoroughly: they will be able in fact to use them, which they cannot do now. But in all I have been saying about this new society hitherto I have been thinking, I must remind you, of its inchoate and incomplete stages: the means of production communized but the resulting wealth still private property. Truth to tell, I think that such a state of things could only embrace a very short period of transition to complete communism: a period

which would only last while people were shaking down into the new Society; for if there were no poor people I don't see how there could be any rich. There would indeed be a natural compulsion, which would prevent any man from doing what he was not fitted for, because he could not do it usefully; and I need not say that in order to arrive at the wealth I have been speaking of we must all work usefully. But if a man does work usefully you can't do without him; and if you can't do without him you can only put him into an inferior position to another useful citizen by means of compulsion; and if you compel him to it, you at once have your privileged classes again. Again, when all people are living comfortably or even handsomely, the keenness of the strife for the better positions, which will then no longer involve a life of idleness or power over one's neighbours, will surely tend to abate: men get rich now in their struggles not to be poor, and because their riches shield them from suffering from the horrors which are a necessary accompaniment of the existence of rich men; *e.g.*, the sight of slums, the squalor of a factory country, the yells and evil language of drunken and brutalized poor people and so forth. But when all private life was decent and, apart from natural accident, happy; and when public institutions satisfied your craving for splendour and completeness; and when no one was allowed to injure the public by defiling the natural beauty of the earth, or by forbidding men's cravings for making it more beautiful to have full sway, what advantage would there be in having more nominal wealth than your neighbour? Therefore, as on the one hand men whose work was acknowledged as useful would scarcely subject themselves to a new system of caste; and, on the other, people living happily with all their reasonable needs easily satisfied would hardly worry themselves with worrying others into giving them extra wealth which they could not use, so I think the communization of the means of industry would speedily be followed by the communization of its product: that is that there would be complete equality of condition amongst all men. Which

again does not mean that people would (all round) use their neighbours' coats, or houses or tooth-brushes, but that every one, whatever work he did, would have the opportunity of satisfying all his reasonable needs according to the admitted standard of the society in which he lived: *i.e.*, without robbing any other citizen. And I must say it is in the belief that this is possible of realization that I continue to be a Socialist. Prove to me that it is not; and I will not trouble myself to do my share towards altering the present state of society, but will try to live on, as little a pain to myself and a nuisance to my neighbour as I may. But yet I must tell you that I shall be more or less both a pain to myself (or at least a disgrace) and a nuisance to my neighbour. For I do declare that any other state of society but Communism is grievous and disgraceful to all belonging to it. Communism

Some of you may expect me to say something about the machinery by which a communistic society is to be carried on. Well, I can say very little that is not merely negative. Most anti-socialists and even some Socialists are apt to confuse, as I hinted before, the co-operative machinery towards which modern life is tending with the essence of Socialism itself; and its enemies attack it, and sometimes its friends defend it on those lines; both to my mind committing a grievous error, especially the latter. *E.g.* An anti-socialist will say, How will you sail a ship in a socialist condition? How? Why with a captain and mates and sailing-master and engineer (if it be a steamer) and A.B.s and stokers and so on and so on. *Only* there will be no 1st 2nd and 3rd class among the passengers: the sailors and stokers will be as well fed and lodged as the captain or passengers; and the captain and the stoker will have the same pay.

There are plenty of enterprises which will be carried on then, as they are now (and probably must be, to be successful), under the guidance of one man. The only difference between then and now will be, that he will be chosen because he is fit for the work, and not because he must have a job found for him; and that he will do his work for the benefit

of each and all, and not for the sake of making a profit. For the rest, time will teach us what new machinery may be necessary to the new life; reasonable men will submit to it without demur; and unreasonable ones will find themselves compelled to by the nature of things, and can only I fear console themselves, as the philosopher did when he knocked his head against the doorpost, by damning the Nature of things.

Well, since our aim is so great and so much to be longed for, the substituting throughout all society of peace for war, pleasure and self-respect for grief and disgrace, we may well seek about strenuously for some means for starting our enterprise; and since it is just these means in which the difficulty lies, I appeal to all Socialists, while they express their thoughts and feelings about them honestly and fearlessly, not to make a quarrel of it with those whose aim is one with theirs, because there is a difference of opinion between them about the usefulness of the details of the means. It is difficult or even impossible not to make mistakes about these, driven as we are by the swift lapse of time and the necessity for doing something amidst it all. So let us forgive the mistakes that others make, even if we make none ourselves, and be at peace amongst ourselves, that we may the better make war upon the monopolist.

HOW I BECAME A SOCIALIST. WRITTEN FOR "JUSTICE," 1894

I AM asked by the Editor to give some sort of a history of the above conversion, and I feel that it may be of some use to do so, if my readers will look upon me as a type of a certain group of people, but not so easy to do clearly, briefly and truly. Let me, however, try. But first, I will say what I mean by being a Socialist, since I am told that the word no longer expresses definitely and with certainty what it did ten years ago. Well, what I mean by Socialism is a condition of society in which there should be neither rich nor poor, neither master nor master's man, neither idle nor overworked, neither brain-sick brain workers, nor heart-sick hand workers, in a word, in which all men would be living in equality of condition, and would manage their affairs unwastefully, and with the full consciousness that harm to one would mean harm to all—the realization at last of the meaning of the word COMMONWEALTH.

Now this view of Socialism which I hold to-day, and hope to die holding, is what I began with; I had no transitional period, unless you may call such a brief period of political radicalism during which I saw my ideal clear enough, but had no hope of any realization of it. That came to an end some months before I joined the (then) Democratic Federation, and the meaning of my joining that body was that I had conceived a hope of the realization of my ideal. If you ask me how much of a hope, or what I thought we Socialists then living and working would accomplish towards it, or when there would be effected any change in the face of society, I must say, I do not know. I can only say that I did not measure my hope, nor the joy that it brought me at the time. For the rest, when I took that step I was blankly ignorant of economics; I had never so much as opened Adam Smith, or heard of Ricardo, or of Karl Marx. Oddly enough, I *had* read some of Mill, to wit, those posthumous papers of his (published, was it in the *Westminster Review* or the *Fortnightly?*) in which

he attacks Socialism in its Fourierist guise. In those papers he put the arguments, as far as they go, clearly and honestly, and the result, so far as I was concerned, was to convince me that Socialism was a necessary change, and that it was possible to bring it about in our own days. Those papers put the finishing touch to my conversion to Socialism. Well, having joined a Socialist body (for the Federation soon became definitely Socialist), I put some conscience into trying to learn the economical side of Socialism, and even tackled Marx, though I must confess that, whereas I thoroughly enjoyed the historical part of "Capital," I suffered agonies of confusion of the brain over reading the pure economics of that great work. Anyhow, I read what I could, and will hope that some information stuck to me from my reading; but more, I must think, from continuous conversation with such friends as Bax and Hyndman and Scheu, and the brisk course of propaganda meetings which were going on at the time, and in which I took my share. Such finish to what of education in practical Socialism as I am capable of I received afterwards from some of my Anarchist friends, from whom I learned, quite against their intention, that Anarchism was impossible, much as I learned from Mill against *his* intention that Socialism was necessary.

But in this telling how I fell into *practical* Socialism I have begun, as I perceive, in the middle, for in my position of a well-to-do man, not suffering from the disabilities which oppress a working-man at every step, I feel that I might never have been drawn into the practical side of the question if an ideal had not forced me to seek towards it. For politics as politics, *i.e.*, not regarded as a necessary if cumbersome and disgustful means to an end, would never have attracted me, nor when I had become conscious of the wrongs of society as it now is, and the oppression of poor people, could I have ever believed in the possibility of a *partial* setting right of those wrongs. In other words, I could never have been such a fool as to believe in the happy and "respectable" poor.

If, therefore, my ideal forced me to look for practical

Socialism, what was it that forced me to conceive of an ideal? Now, here comes in what I said (in this paper) of my being a type of a certain group of mind.

How I became a Socialist

Before the uprising of *modern* Socialism almost all intelligent people either were, or professed themselves to be, quite contented with the civilization of this century. Again, almost all of these really were thus contented, and saw nothing to do but to perfect the said civilization by getting rid of a few ridiculous survivals of the barbarous ages. To be short, this was the *Whig* frame of mind, natural to the modern prosperous middle-class men, who, in fact, as far as mechanical progress is concerned, have nothing to ask for, if only Socialism would leave them alone to enjoy their plentiful style.

But besides these contented ones there were others who were not really contented, but had a vague sentiment of repulsion to the triumph of civilization, but were coerced into silence by the measureless power of Whiggery. Lastly, there were a few who were in open rebellion against the said Whiggery—a few, say two, Carlyle and Ruskin. The latter, before my days of practical Socialism, was my master towards the ideal aforesaid, and, looking backward, I cannot help saying, by the way, how deadly dull the world would have been twenty years ago but for Ruskin! It was through him that I learned to give form to my discontent, which I must say was not by any means vague. Apart from the desire to produce beautiful things, the leading passion of my life has been and is hatred of modern civilization. What shall I say of it now, when the words are put into my mouth, my hope of its destruction—what shall I say of its supplanting by Socialism?

What shall I say concerning its mastery of and its waste of mechanical power, its commonwealth so poor, its enemies of the commonwealth so rich, its stupendous organization —for the misery of life! Its contempt of simple pleasures which everyone could enjoy but for its folly? Its eyeless vulgarity which has destroyed art, the one certain solace of labour? All this I felt then as now, but I did not know why it

was so. The hope of the past times was gone, the struggles of mankind for many ages had produced nothing but this sordid, aimless, ugly confusion; the immediate future seemed to me likely to intensify all the present evils by sweeping away the last survivals of the days before the dull squalor of civilization had settled down on the world. This was a bad look-out indeed, and, if I may mention myself as a personality and not as a mere type, especially so to a man of my disposition, careless of metaphysics and religion, as well as of scientific analysis, but with a deep love of the earth and the life on it, and a passion for the history of the past of mankind. Think of it! Was it all to end in a counting-house on the top of a cinder-heap, with Podsnap's drawing-room in the offing, and a Whig committee dealing out champagne to the rich and margarine to the poor in such convenient proportions as would make all men contented together, though the pleasure of the eyes was gone from the world, and the place of Homer was to be taken by Huxley? Yet, believe me, in my heart, when I really forced myself to look towards the future, that is what I saw in it, and, as far as I could tell, scarce anyone seemed to think it worth while to struggle against such a consummation of civilization. So there I was in for a fine pessimistic end of life, if it had not somehow dawned on me that amidst all this filth of civilization the seeds of a great chance, what we others call Social-Revolution, were beginning to germinate. The whole face of things was changed to me by that discovery, and all I had to do then in order to become a Socialist was to hook myself on to the practical movement, which, as before said, I have tried to do as well as I could.

To sum up, then, the study of history and the love and practice of art forced me into a hatred of the civilization which, if things were to stop as they are, would turn history into inconsequent nonsense, and make art a collection of the curiosities of the past which would have no serious relation to the life of the present.

But the consciousness of revolution stirring amidst our

hateful modern society prevented me, luckier than many others of artistic perceptions, from crystallizing into a mere railer against "progress" on the one hand, and on the other from wasting time and energy in any of the numerous schemes by which the quasi-artistic of the middle classes hope to make art grow when it has no longer any root, and thus I became a practical Socialist.

A last word or two. Perhaps some of our friends will say, what have we to do with these matters of history and art? We want by means of Social-Democracy to win a decent livelihood, we want in some sort to live, and that at once. Surely any one who professes to think that the question of art and cultivation must go before that of the knife and fork (and there are some who do propose that) does not understand what art means, or how that its roots must have a soil of a thriving and unanxious life. Yet it must be remembered that civilization has reduced the workman to such a skinny and pitiful existence, that he scarcely knows how to frame a desire for any life much better than that which he now endures perforce. It is the province of art to set the true ideal of a full and reasonable life before him, a life to which the perception and creation of beauty, the enjoyment of real pleasure that is, shall be felt to be as necessary to man as his daily bread, and that no man, and no set of men, can be deprived of this except by mere opposition, which should be resisted to the utmost.

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